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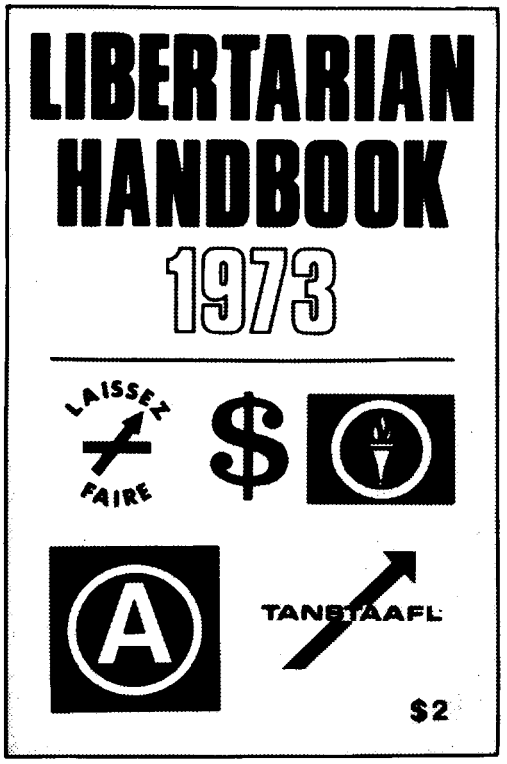

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Editorial Introduction: The Significance of Ayn Rand

This is a very special issue of *REASON* for me and for Reason Enterprises. Ayn Rand is one of the few people in my life I admire enormously, and all of us at *REASON* share respect for her.

Shortly after reading two of Miss Rand's most important novels I headed West, but before I moved I went to New York and met her privately. Miss Rand was warm and very open towards me. I recall that I said to her that perhaps the reason I admired her philosophy was because I, too, was a refugee from a Communist country. She said this was very likely not the case—but at any rate such matters were not significant for the appreciation of the kind of ideas she has emphasized. Her point was very important and well taken.

Many people admire Miss Rand. In particular, she is often referred to and talked about by people sharing libertarian political ideals. Some within this movement have insulted Miss Rand and I personally believe that such insults are very disrespectful where, in fact, no disrespect is deserved. I personally have had occasion to disagree with Miss Rand and I am not always sure that I understand what she says—simply because I hear of much of what she says in public (e.g. radio, television, personal appearances, etc.) via other people's reports. Still, disagreement or its appearance aside, Miss Rand is undoubtedly one of the great geniuses of our time.

I want to mention one aspect of Miss Rand's present political position which has disturbed some people who consider her one of, if not *the*, greatest defenders of human freedom. Some say she has been too "right wing", referring to her attitude toward the Soviet Union, Communist bloc governments, official treatment of Soviet government activities—including cultural exchange programs, etc.—and foreign policy in general. Although, for instance, Miss Rand opposed the Vietnam war, she is said to oppose amnesty for draft "dodgers." She once renounced going to the Bolshoi Ballet and she considered Nixon's visit to China a travesty for a representative of a supposedly free country. Other instances could be added.

Most generally, Miss Rand has been criticized, often with honest (as well as reasonably careful) conviction, for her support of the American government as against others. Presumably she gave her support too readily.

I want to remark only that Miss Rand seems, to my mind, to be very aware of, even if not fully focused on, the dangers of the loss of liberty and justice wherever in the world they occur. Communism is one form of that danger, and perhaps concentrating on it seems odd to some. But anyone aware of the capacity of a comprehensive but false, yet in some obvious ways attractively-presented ideology to squash capsules of liberty in the world must appreciate her stance. Her emphasis on the value of liberty cannot be faulted.

This is not to say that there *could not* be errors in Miss Rand's stance on these kinds of matters. But frankly I consider her moral and political judgments more trustworthy than Daniel Ellsberg's, or Nicholas von Hoffman's, *et al*. And unless I know better independently, I am reluctant to just fly off with insults.

Enough of this. I teach philosophy and am in good command of the philosophy of Objectivism. (Out of respect I should mention that Miss Rand has not said so—I certainly do not have her sanction. I used to be grieved by this—sincerely. It is very desirable to get acknowledgement from someone you admire.) Let me say something about Miss Rand's stature within what I take to be the professional philosophical arena. It is quite an arena—too many people, many inventing instead of investigating reality, oversupplied and underinspired. But it *is* the professional practice of philosophy and a culture takes from it whatever is offered up (unfortunately, at times, no doubt).

Miss Rand is not respected by the bulk of the community of philosophers. Those who know of her through her political commentaries even despise her. Others consider her irrelevant and too ambitious—usually by dubious comparisons. But it is *not* true that once her ideas are well presented, in the course of arguments between people who are truly engaged in inquiry or in papers or other forums, she comes away defeated. Her ideas are so *potent*—I should say so *right on*—that when given a chance with decent minds listening and thinking, she gains respect—or at least intrigued curiosity. More importantly, there is now a resurgence of a direction in philosophical thinking which is not so far from Miss Rand's concerns and findings as she, unfortunately, believes. There are some important and valuable trends, even if not in full abundance.

Will Miss Rand be remembered in the history of philosophy? Such prediction is difficult and I am not able to make it with much certainty. I believe she will be remembered—probably on a level with Hobbes and Locke, but with greater enthusiasm by those who know her work well. She will have students, scholars who study her, and she will forever offer wisdom and give inspiration to the defenders of the individual and the role of his mind in living his life—both in ethics and in politics. Miss Rand's work in epistemology is too restricted (although aimed at perhaps the most important aspect of the field) to provide avenues of prolonged scholarly analysis. Here, as in some other areas, if she is remembered it will be by way of others who carry on her work. She has not spent enough time on many crucial issues.

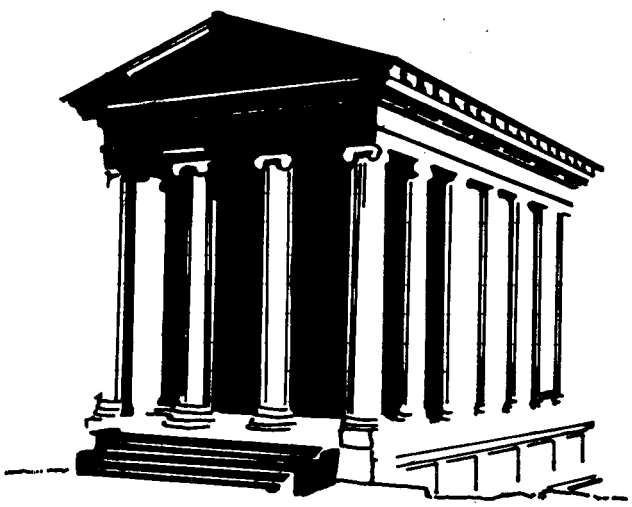
As a novelist she is a master and she will be enjoyed in any age that welcomes the spirit of romanticism. But to say any more would involve me in prophecies about where civilization will head in the future. Free will must be taken seriously: Miss Rand *might* be forgotten, as others have been, despite her value to any searching minds.

I hope that many people appreciate Miss Rand as I do. I think I am right to feel strongly about and think highly of her. I intensely wish at least that those who form an opinion about her ideas and art will take the time to learn of both. It is to that end that *REASON* Magazine dedicates this special issue.

In early 1962, before I entered college, I wrote to Miss Rand about a personal matter which concerned me. She answered with what I can only call great wisdom. She concluded her letter by remarking that whatever I might do in my life, I should never abnegate my reason. Reason, indeed, should be the only *absolute* in my life.

I believe that *REASON* Magazine is dedicated to just exactly that principle.

TIBOR R. MACHAN
Senior Editor



The New Republic

Douglas Den Uyl

Libertarians do not always know that their political philosophy is the most radical stance to be had in the political arena. As such, making progress is seldom seen to be the result of hard, sustained—albeit exhilarating—work. Yet that is exactly what a free society demands—what a good human life in a human community must involve.

Douglas Den Uyl is one of those rare people within the libertarian intellectual community who takes his personal dedication to liberty very *seriously. The kind of work Mr. Den Uyl engages in is truly that of the "new intellectual." He has published in* REASON *on several occasions and this time he has again surpassed himself with a brilliant contribution to an understanding of both the author and ideas of one of this movement's most important, if not* the *most important, philosophers.*

I am proud to introduce Mr. Den Uyl's informative, lucid, and at times radical ideas on the connection between Plato's REPUBLIC *and Rand's* ATLAS SHRUGGED. *Frankly I have learned to appreciate both these thinkers better from Mr. Den Uyl's discussion. I hope you will too.*

—Tibor R. Machan

We are about to embark on an analogy between one of the least and one of the most reputable books in libertarian circles—Plato's *REPUBLIC* and Rand's *ATLAS SHRUGGED.* [1] The analogy will be between the enterprises of the two, not their respective philosophic positions. While analogies prove nothing, an analogy between the *REPUBLIC* and *ATLAS SHRUGGED* is instructive.

The great *teaching* of the *REPUBLIC* is the impossibility of the absolutely just regime; but the fundamental problem of the *REPUBLIC* is the relationship between *philosophy* and the *city.* [2] We shall consider the former first.

The *REPUBLIC* begins with a gathering at the home of Cephalus, to discuss the meaning of justice. Socrates proposes to examine justice on the basis of a comparison. He seeks to conceive a just city because he believes that if one finds justice in the city it will be easier to see it in the individual. This is the great comparison between the soul of the individual and the "soul" of the city.

PLATO'S IDEAL CITY

There are some amazing things about Plato's city. Most noticeable is the city's absolute communism[3] which includes the abolition of the family for the sake of a community of women and children. Then there is the establishment of the rule of the philosopher king. Yet unlike Marxism, the

REPUBLIC's communism is not established for the sake of prosperity or the glorification of the common man, but rather *to secure virtue.* The best regime, in the eyes of the ancients, was the regime which promoted virtue, and for Plato this was best exemplified by some form of communism.

The perfectly just regime is impossible for many reasons. The first stems from Platonic metaphysics: justice is an Idea and thus can never be fully realized in our world. Also, the just regime is impossible because founding it requires banishing everyone over ten years old—a task which the philosophers have no power to undertake. Moreover, the just regime requires that people give up their strong attachments to family, property, and the city of their birth. Another reason is that the philosophers would not rule, since their concerns are not with everyday political matters. But why then does Plato spend time describing an impossible city? Allan Bloom answers in a way which summarizes most adequately the enterprise of the *REPUBLIC:*

> What then was the use of spending so much time and effort on a city that is impossible? Precisely to show its impossibility. This was not just any city, but one constructed to meet all the demands of justice. Its impossibility demonstrates the impossibility of the actualization of a just regime and hence moderates the moral indignation a man might experience at the sight of less-than-perfect regimes. . . . If the infinite longing for justice on earth is merely a dream or a prayer, the shedding of blood in its name turns from idealism into criminality. . . . What matter if a few million die now, if one is sure that countless generations of mankind will enjoy the fruits of justice? Socrates thinks about the end which is ultimately aimed at by all reformers or revolutionaries but to which they do not pay sufficient attention. He shows what a regime would have to be in order to be just and why such a regime is impossible. . . . The proper spirit of reform, then, is moderation. Socrates constructs his utopia to point up the dangers of what we would call utopianism; as such it is the greatest critique of political idealism ever written. . . . The striving for the perfectly just city puts unreasonable and despotic demands on ordinary men, and it abuses and misuses the best men. . . . Political idealism is the most destructive of human passions. [4]

Douglas Den Uyl is a graduate student in philosophy at the University of Chicago. He received his A.B. in philosophy and political science from Kalamazoo College. He was co-editor of the 1972 edition of A IS A DIRECTORY OF LIBERTARIAN PERIODICALS. *His article "Knowledge, Control, and Ownership" appeared in the February 1973 issue of* REASON.

"Only a community of philosophers could operate in the manner of Galt's Gulch . . . . Galt's Gulch 'worked' because it operated on true principle in an absolutely consensual community."

Thus the teaching of the *REPUBLIC* is not the virtues of communism, nor even its desirability, but the virtue of political moderation.[5]

THE VIRTUE OF MODERATION

We must pause here to examine just what Plato means by *moderation.* It has two basic meanings.[6] The first is moderation of bodily appetites, or "temperance." The second meaning concerns harmony of the soul. Those familiar with Plato will recall that in Plato's psychology the soul is divided into three parts: (a) the *desiring* part, (b) the *spirited* part, and (c) the *intellectual* or *reasoning* part. Moderation as harmony of the soul means simply that the third part should rule the other two.

We previously noted that Plato drew a parallel between the soul of an individual and the "soul" of the City. A good person has the third part of his soul rule the other two. Similarly, the good city is ruled by the philosophers—the men of the mind. This is not to say that Plato's final city was in this sense moderate. But Plato generally sought to mold a city based on the three parts of the soul: the philosophers were the intellectual part, the guardians were the spirited part, and the "many" were the desiring part. Harmony, and therefore moderation, was achieved in the city, as in the soul, by having the philosopher rule the other two parts. This completes the analogy between the soul of the individual and the "soul" of the city.

There is, nonetheless, a problem in the relationship between philosophy and the city. Bloom recognizes the problem by stating:

> The problem appears to be something like the following. As presented in the *REPUBLIC,* the virtues can be derived from two possible sources: the necessities of the city and the necessities of philosophy. . . . The virtues connected with the city help to preserve the city and thereby its inhabitants; preservation, or mere life, is the goal. The virtues connected with philosophy aid in the quest for the comprehensive truth; the good life is the goal. Both goals make their demands, and those demands conflict.[7]

Much of the reason for the above distinction stems from Plato's soul/body dichotomy. However, a more general political problem for Plato is how to get the best men to rule. As Strauss points out:

> Only a radical change on the part of both the cities and the philosophers can bring about that harmony between them for which they seem to be meant by nature. The change consists precisely in this, that the cities become willing to be ruled by philosophers and the philosophers become willing to rule the cities.[8]

In order for the city to become willing to be ruled by the philosophers the "many" must be persuaded that philosophy is a benefit, not a threat.[9] Also, the philosophers must be persuaded to rule, but they are unwilling, and thus the final city is impossible. Only compulsion "could induce them to take part in public life in the just city."[10] The philosophers' search for truth provides little incentive for them to return to "the cave" and rule. Thus, their position as rulers depends entirely on the persuadability of the "many". But,

> . . . the multitude is not as persuadable by the philosophers as we sanguinely assumed. . . . This is the true reason why the coincidence of philosophy and the city tend away from one another in opposite direction.[11]

The reason for the opposing tendency is quite simple; we observe it every day. Most people cling to their prejudices and habits. They are suspicious of all that questions them—whether or not that which questions them is true. We are thus led back to our original theme of moderation. To force the truth upon unwilling subjects is to be untrue to the truth, while at the same time diverting the energies of the best people away from truth towards compulsion.

RAND'S IDEAL CITY

We shall apply the same format as above in comparing what has been said to certain aspects of *ATLAS SHRUGGED.* Rand also has an impossible final city—**Galt's Gulch.** As Galt said, "We have no laws in this valley, no rules, no formal organizations of any kind."[12]

Plato's city is impossible because the Idea or form of justice cannot be manifested in our world. Rand, of course, would reject such metaphysics, and Galt's Gulch does not imply it. Yet a subtle implication of Plato's metaphysics[13] is that because the city is devoted to *absolute* justice the only people who could ultimately compose it are philosophers. Exactly the same can be said of Galt's Gulch—it is a community of philosophic persons.[14] Only a community of philosophers could operate in the manner of Galt's Gulch: it is impossible to generalize its social

organization.

Plato's final city is also impossible because it could not be founded, since the philosophers would have to take actions beyond their power. Rand's city was founded, however, by her characters withdrawing from society rather than, as Plato proposed, by removing most of society. It appears, then, that the founding of the best city is not a problem for Rand—perhaps not for Galt's Gulch as such, but there will certainly be a problem if Galt's Gulch is to be the model for society in general. Galt's Gulch "worked" because it operated on true principles in an absolutely consensual community.

Plato also sought to establish consensus, and this was done through education. Both he and Rand realize the value of consensus. Yet it is precisely this consensus which poses the problem of foundation. Plato could not found the City because, even if his education scheme worked, his philosophers had no power to get the system going. For Rand, the problem is even more severe. In order to establish the best regime, the principle of noninitiation of force will have to be violated. Some people will be forced to live under a system they do not agree with.[15] One might argue that this is all right since it is done in the name of truth and justice. To accept this view is to align oneself with every ideologist of the past who has taken all kinds of action under the same banner. Such a view divorces ends from means. It can be argued that if one dislikes the new situation one is free to leave. This is only a quasi-solution and ignores more than it brings to light (such as the costs imposed on perhaps a large number of people. Besides, is there a great difference between this and Plato's forcing everyone over ten to leave in order to found the good city.) Rand's own dramatic answer—a strike of "men of the mind"—is quite novel and interesting, but when Galt returns to society there will probably be many who remain unconvinced. Establishing a consensus on the proper make-up of society is not easy, and has plagued thinkers for a long time. It is a problem for both Plato and Rand.

CONVINCING THE POPULACE

The above implies our next point. One of the reasons Plato's regime is impossible is that one must renounce a great number of things to be a part of the regime. These were mostly "material" things. Yet for Rand one has little to give up and much to gain in Galt's Gulch. However, the common man must give up more subtle things if Galt's Gulch is to be more than an enclave. These things are the views, prejudices, habits, and expectations people have about what society should be like—even though they stand to gain "materially" by thinking otherwise. As Plato points out, many people like "lurking in the shadows" of the cave and are opposed to the light of truth. This brings us back to the notion of consensus and the foundation problem. The impulse of desiring

"The strike in ATLAS SHRUGGED *was more of a dramatization than a real, practical solution."*

security in one's own views is strong, making the establishment of consensus a difficult problem.

Lastly, Plato's final city was impossible because the philosophers would not rule. Here the term "ruling" means "providing the major social guidance". The philosophers of both Plato's *REPUBLIC* and *ATLAS SHRUGGED* had a strong tendency to shy away from politics. Yet for both thinkers these philosophers were necessary in the best regime. Thus, in our broad use of "rule," both thinkers desired the "rule" of philosophers. We shall say more about this later.

Of course, Rand did not write *ATLAS SHRUGGED* to show the impossibility of Galt's Gulch, but rather to show its desirability. She thus was not trying to present a critique of political idealism in the way Plato was—although in a sense, *ATLAS SHRUGGED* is such a critique. Politics means the use of force, and the use of force to obtain social ends is criticized in Rand's work. In this sense, *ATLAS SHRUGGED* is a critique of political idealism. Yet *ATLAS SHRUGGED* also extols political idealism in so far as it is a desire to see a regime operating on the principles of truth and justice. Plato, for the most part, would agree.

PRINCIPLES VS. MODERATION

The teaching of the *REPUBLIC* is moderation. It would appear that *ATLAS SHRUGGED* teaches the opposite. While this is partly true, Galt's Gulch is an example of moderation. Both of the senses in which Plato used the term "moderation" are characteristic of the people in Galt's Gulch. While devotion to principle in Plato's best regime leads to immoderation (which says something about Plato's social principles)—devotion to principle in Rand's leads to the opposite. *ATLAS SHRUGGED* teaches the practical importance of principles. From Plato we learn the practical importance of political moderation. The age-old political problem is the combination of these two so that the former does not lead to mere ideology and the latter to pragmatism.

While Rand never speaks of moderation as such, it is clear that she considers it a virtue in the practical sense. I say this for two reasons: 1) Rand's continued emphasis on reshaping the intellectual community in preference to more overt political action, and 2) that the action (the strike) taken by

"Capitalism is generally a system where only what has proved itself succeeds. If moderation is a virtue, capitalism is an example of it."

the inhabitants of Galt's Gulch was amazingly moderate compared to the tactics of most radical revolutionaries.[16] Capitalism itself is often impressively moderate, because the risk-taker and innovator are given a free rein. The majority who move more conservatively are free to change at a pace we accept. The system, then, is not subject to stagnation nor impelled by every wild scheme. Capitalism is generally a system where only what has proved itself succeeds. If moderation is a virtue, capitalism is an example of it. Thus we see the importance of moderation for both thinkers, though it plays a lesser role in *ATLAS SHRUGGED* than in the *REPUBLIC.*

Plato drew an analogy between the individual soul and the "soul" of the city. Rand also makes this parallel. Galt's Gulch exemplifies the souls of the people who were there. Indeed, the best society, as Rand sees it, should institute the principles by which individuals should deal with one another. The "soul" of the good city must parallel the souls of the best people—the "men of the mind"—and we see again the importance of the "rule" of the philosophers.[17]

PROMOTING VIRTUE

Plato's problem of the relationship between philosophy and the city is also a problem in Rand. In Bloom's initial quote we noted that the virtues connected with the city deal simply with preservation of mere life while the virtues connected with philosophy deal with truth or the good life. This is a characteristic distinction between modern and ancient political philosophy. Starting with Hobbes, modern political philosophy teaches that the regime should be devoted only to preserving the life of its members. The emphasis of the ancients, however, was that the regime should promote virtue in its members. While Rand appears to extend the former view, her real emphasis is on the latter. Actually, Rand breaks this dichotomy. She shows that the true requirements of life are also the basis for value and therefore for virtue.[18] But Rand's real problem between philosophy and the city did not focus on the above issue. If the tendency of the city or regime is away from philosophy, it is because the regime holds a monopoly on force. Force and reason tend away from one another,[19] and a regime in the hands of nonvirtuous or unphilosophic men can be very destructive. The problem then, is getting the philosophers to "rule", or getting a regime which is founded on true principles advocated by philosophic persons.

Yet only compulsion could get the philosophers to rule in Plato's scheme. In an odd way this is also true of Rand. In *ATLAS SHRUGGED* it was compulsion that got the "men of the mind" involved in political matters. True, it was not direct compulsion by the citizenry to take over governmental offices, but it was nonetheless compulsion which forced them to take action in hopes of restructuring society. The kind of compulsion involved in *ATLAS SHRUGGED* was the institutionalization of pure physical force. Because this force is anathema to truth and justice, those most affected by it had to take some sort of action. They were thus compelled into politics. But their political involvement was in reaction to, rather than because of, the compulsion, and this is the difference between Rand and Plato.

AUTHORITY TO "RULE"

In Rand's scheme, the "men of the mind" do not have to rule in the traditional sense of that term. All that is required is that the philosophers somehow get people to accept their wisdom on the proper social order. Once the system is set up, the philosophers need only keep an eye on things to make sure virtue is maintained. Unlike Plato's, Rand's philosophers need not hold political office.

The problem remains, though, as to how to persuade the "many" of the truth and benefit of right thinking or philosophy. This problem is not solved by Rand and certainly not by Plato. It is a problem still discussed by libertarians. In *ATLAS SHRUGGED* the strike was the solution to this problem. It taught doubters a lesson. But this was more a dramatization than a real, practical solution. Rand's nonfiction view of changing academia and then relying on the filtering of ideas through the culture is more practical and probably necessary and desirable. Moreover, this concords with Plato's general view of the importance of education.

But even if education were the ultimate solution to the problem of acceptance, the division between philosophy and the city would remain. Since force and reason are antithetical, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that force will be abused in any regime. This is the real problem of philosophy and the city for Rand, and one that each political philosopher (including Plato) has had to deal with. Indeed, it was probably Plato who first clarified the issue as a philosophic problem. It still remains to be solved—if it can be.

VIRTUE IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The greatness of Plato's *REPUBLIC* comes not from the solutions it offers, but from the political

"Rand shows that the true requirements of life are also the basis for value and therefore for virtue."

problems it brings to light. In the *REPUBLIC,* the impossibility of the final city teaches us the importance of moderation. It shows that our disgust with the present regime, though justified, does not therefore give license to take any arbitrary action to rectify the situation. It teaches the large problems involved in properly securing our goal. Galt's Gulch shows us the importance of principle and what virtuous people are like. It also dramatizes what life can be like under the just regime and why we should seek it. The proper combination of moderation and principle may not be easy, but in order to achieve it, that combination must be recognized as just in itself.

And if there are parallels between the individual soul and the "soul" of the city, then the problem of moderation and principle in each of *us* parallels the general problem of philosophy and the city. For it is precisely subsidiary aspects of this problem, such as the foundation problem, the maintenance problem, consensus, etc., that indicate the perception and its relevance of Plato's work to our own situation. Libertarians are willing to discuss ancient philosophy, but seldom ancient political philosophy. While we must not carry the foregoing analogy too far, it would be a mistake not to take the ancients seriously in thinking of our own philosophy and its relation to social problems.

Plato's *REPUBLIC* is the central text of ancient political philosophy, mainly because of its one most basic teaching—the importance of virtue for achieving the best society. Rand has many centuries of knowledge to draw from which was unavailable to the ancients. But *ATLAS SHRUGGED,* while not a mere restatement of ancient political philosophy, is clearly in the tradition of the *REPUBLIC* and other great ancient works. Indeed, the enterprise of *ATLAS SHRUGGED* is closer to Plato in many important respects than it is to Locke. The emphasis on virtue which characterizes the enterprise of ancient political philosophy is often lacking in more modern traditions. Indeed, we libertarians also often seem to lose sight of these important words of Rand's:

> The New Intellectual must fight for capitalism, not as a "practical" issue, not as an economic issue, but, with the most rigorous pride, as a moral issue. That is what capitalism deserves, and nothing less will save it.[20]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] I thank Dale Haviland for his editorial revisions without which this paper may never have emerged in readable form.
[2] I owe this interpretation of the *REPUBLIC* to the writings of Leo Strauss and Allan Bloom and to the lectures of Joseph Cropsey (University of Chicago) as I understand them.
[3] One should note that this communism applied only to the upper classes. Also Plato, unlike Marx, believed in the division of labor.
[4] Allan Bloom, *THE REPUBLIC OF PLATO* (Basic Books Inc. 1968), pp. 409-10.
[5] Another important aspect of the *REPUBLIC* is that it serves to bring out certain basic questions of political philosophy. As Strauss points out: "As Cicero has observed, the *REPUBLIC* does not bring to light the best possible regime but rather the nature of political things—the nature of the city .... By letting us see that the city constructed in accordance with this requirement is not possible, he (Plato) lets us see the essential limits, the nature, of the city." Leo Strauss, *THE CITY AND MAN* (Rand McNally & Co. 1964), p. 138.
[6] See Bloom, *THE REPUBLIC OF PLATO,* note 4 supra, footnote 21 to Book III, p. 451.
[7] Bloom, *THE REPUBLIC OF PLATO,* note 4 supra, p. 396.
[8] Strauss, *THE CITY AND MAN,* note 5 supra, p. 123.
[9] One of the reasons for the special friendship of Thrasymachus and Socrates was because only Thrasymachus could persuade the many. See Strauss, *THE CITY AND MAN,* note 5 supra, p. 124.
[10] Strauss, note 5 supra, p. 125.
[11] Strauss, note 5 supra, p. 125.
[12] Ayn Rand, *ATLAS SHRUGGED* (Signet Books 1959), p. 664.
[13] This implication does not *necessarily* follow from the whole of Plato's metaphysics, but only his politics.
[14] It should be obvious by now that the use of the term "philosopher" is being employed in its broadest sense. "Philosopher" here means "persons of extreme virtue who devote their life to the most rigorous uses of their mind."
[15] A similar problem was a reason for Plato introducing the notion of the "noble lie".
[16] Libertarians as a group have the distinction of being moderate political radicals in their activities. This is not always the case, but I believe our approach will pay off in the long run. For a good statement of moderation, see *LIBERTARIAN FORUM,* November 1972.
[17] Despite our use of the term "ruling" in this paper, the reader should never lose sight of the difference between Rand and Plato on their real uses of the term.
[18] Cf. "The Objectivist Ethics", *THE VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS* (Signet Books 1964).
[19] This statement could be made of a limited government regime or an anarcho-capitalist system.
[20] Ayn Rand, *FOR THE NEW INTELLECTUAL* (Signet Books 1961), p. 54.

TO AYN RAND
ON THE OCCASION OF HER BIRTHDAY

For making me selfish
When I am unsteady:
"Thank you, Miss Rand."
(I feel better already).

Dennis J. Chase

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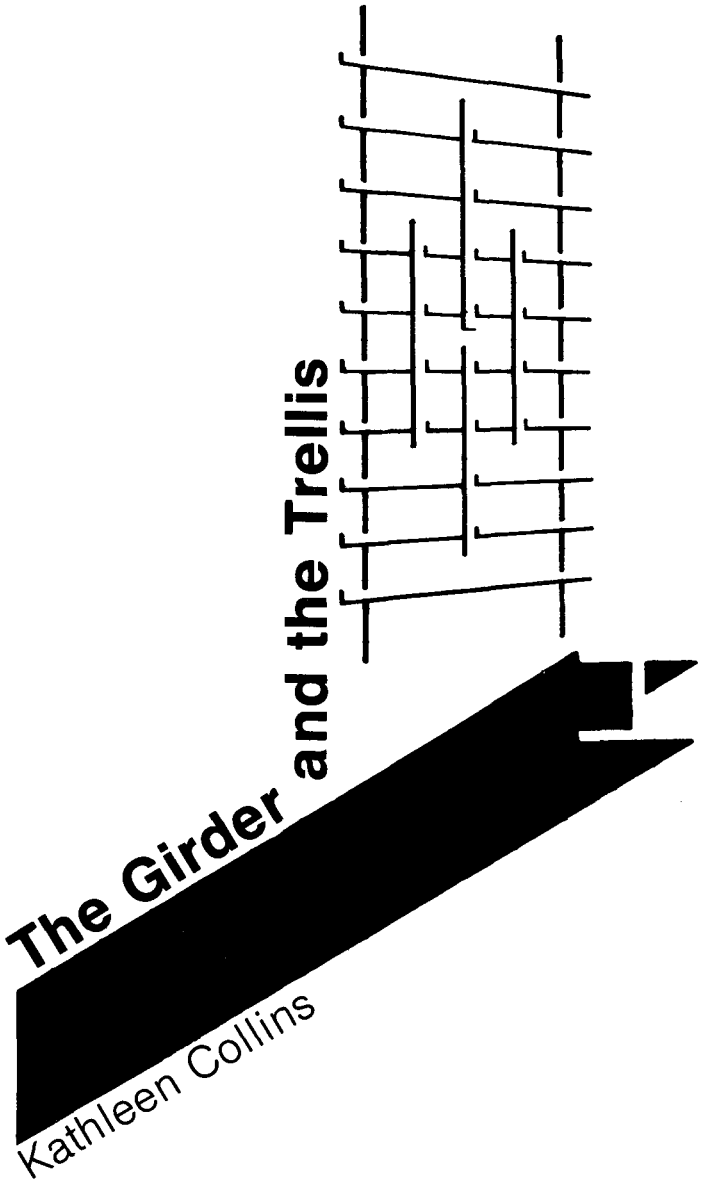
IF YOU SUPPORT THIS PROPOSAL, SEND YOUR NAME TO THE COMMITTEE

Iris Murdoch is one of the few British philosophers who is accepted as both a novelist and philosopher by academia. In contrast, Ayn Rand is a widely read and admired American philosopher who is entirely out of favor with the academic community. She, too, writes both novels and philosophical essays.

Ms. Collins' article contrasts the difference between these two individuals—as well as the reasons for the different manner in which they are received by both the intellectual community and the public.

The Girder and the Trellis



Kathleen Collins

Ayn Rand and Iris Murdoch are noted contemporary philosophical novelists. In addition to their fiction, both have published books and essays challenging other philosophical systems. In an age fiercely sensitive to the issue, both have dealt in their novels with the theme of freedom versus slavery. Yet the novels of Iris Murdoch, exclusively, are analyzed in at least three books[1] and considered among others in several more. Ayn Rand, however, is the subject of no book of literary criticism written outside the Objectivist camp.[2] That is to say, Iris Murdoch is considered by Great Britain's critical community as an important part of the current literary scene, whereas Ayn Rand, in the United States, is criticized at length solely as a philosopher and, despite a constant readership and influence in academic circles, is studiously ignored by literary critics.

It would be precipitous to explain this contrast solely in terms of differences in the two authors' philosophies, although that is undoubtedly a factor. I suggest that it would be more significant to examine their respective theories of art, determine the degree to which those theories translate into their fiction, and discover if either theory has something to offer the other without destroying internal validities on either side. With that foundation it should be possible to offer a more comprehensive explanation of the disparity in their status, and to speculate upon its consequences.

CONFLICTING VISIONS

The primary difficulty in comparing Iris Murdoch to any other novelist is in isolating Murdoch herself. She writes, "Art is not an expression of personality, it is a question rather of the continued expelling of oneself from the matter in hand."[3] Such a philosophy put into practice, as she unfailingly does, makes her well-nigh invisible in her fiction

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"Rand likens the plot of a novel to the 'steel skeleton of a skyscraper' which relegates the other artistic elements to subordinate positions."

and camouflaged even in her essays. For her, the novel must be "a house fit for free characters to live in,"[4] its highest aim to reveal "that other people exist,"[5] its creator's essential quality one of tolerance in the presence of "persons other than the author [who have] a right to exist and to have a separate mode of being which is important and interesting to themselves."[6] Her contention is specifically with Romanticism, which she defines as an art form "where the struggle between persons is really a struggle within the mind of a single character. In such works we feel the ruthless subjection of the characters to the will of their author."[7] She criticizes as "far too shallow and flimsy" the Romantic conception of human personality, of "the individual as a free rational will"[8] and "capable of self-knowledge by methods agreeable to science and common sense."[9] She sees people as "benighted creatures sunk in a reality whose nature we are constantly and overwhelmingly tempted to deform by fantasy"[10] and looks to literature to "arm us against consolation and fantasy and . . . help us to recover from the ailments of Romanticism" by leading us to "re-discover a sense of the density of our lives."[11]

Ayn Rand, in *THE ROMANTIC MANIFESTO,* offers her own definition of Romanticism as a movement "based on the recognition of the principle that man possesses the faculty of volition."[12] It is precisely the vision of man which Murdoch denounces as "flimsy" that Rand proposes as the essence of the individual. Elsewhere Rand declares that the purpose of her writing is "the projection of an ideal man,"[13] and it is obvious from Rand's work that she considers her ideal man physiologically and psychologically possible: he is not a dream but a blueprint.[14] Rand sums up Romanticism as "a crusade to glorify man's existence,"[15] and she is willing to strip him of his "density" in order to portray what she considers his essence.

Moving from art to morals, Murdoch declares that they are the same, for "the essence of both of them is love. Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realization that something other than oneself is real. Love, and so art and morals, is the discovery of reality."[16] It is at this point, the importance of the real, that Murdoch and Rand are contingent. It is here, too, that they touch and part, for although Rand proclaims the novel to be "a selective re-creation of reality, its means . . . evaluative abstractions, its task . . . the concretization of metaphysical essentials,"[17] she is not content with a reality in which her ideal man is an oddity. Instead, she qualifies its re-creation as one "according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments."[18] Consequently, where Murdoch strives for multiplicity, Rand projects unity—of vision, purpose, conduct—as the proper goal for people. There is no expunging of the author in Ayn Rand's novels, nor could there be, given this rejection of "separate modes of being" as having equal validity for man existing qua man. Her passionate attachment to form in life, where it is difficult to achieve, and in art, where it is more easily attainable (even to the degree of ossified convention) provides another point of comparison with Iris Murdoch.

FORM AND STRUCTURE

Obviously "a house fit for free characters to live in" would ideally be designed by those characters. That is probably the main source of Murdoch's grudging acceptance of literary form as a necessary evil. Proceeding, as she does, from a tolerance of actuality, she tends to draw back from that which is not evident in actuality, that is, form. In "The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited" she writes that "form is the temptation of love and its peril, whether in art or life: to round off a situation, to sum up a character."[19] Her solution is to emphasize the "contingency" of her characters, the unavoidable "messiness" of their lives, and she concludes that "to combine form with a respect for reality with all its odd contingent ways is the highest art of prose."[20]

Rand, however, shuns "the range of the immediate moment . . . the trivial irrelevancies, repetitions and routines of daily living" in order to emphasize "the essentials, the turning points, the direction of a man's life."[21] She dismisses the possibility of a purposeful novel without purposeful characters. The effects of "contingency" are to be absorbed by individuals and not allowed the influence Murdoch accords them; consequently, "messiness" does not have a place in Rand's literary vision, and people aware of its influence on their lives may have difficulty in placing themselves in Rand's fictional world. She likens the plot of a novel to the "steel skeleton of a skyscraper"[22] which relegates the other artistic elements to subordinate positions. Murdoch's use of plot, by contrast, can be likened to a trellis which provides support but only minimal direction for free-growing, natural things.[23] The girder and the trellis, if adhered to in their exponents' fiction, should provide two quite dissimilar literary experiences.

MURDOCH'S WORLD

Iris Murdoch's fourteen novels demonstrate

"Only Howard Roark and John Galt are untouched by value conflicts."

that her desire to show multiplicity does not preclude the repetition of character, relationship, or event. From Jake Conaghue in *UNDER THE NET* to Garth Gibson Grey in *AN ACCIDENTAL MAN,* a significant number of characters are engaged in writing books, usually at length and ineffectually. Few of her people ever find, or really seek, professional success. In addition, there are several pairs of young people discovering love, at least eight overt homosexuals, three grotesquely dying parents, and an assortment of enchanters and power-wielders, demonic and destructive. There are, above all, people who refuse to apprehend the reality of others, who insist upon cloaking them in myth and illusion, with sometimes comic, sometimes tragic results. But even though "multiplicity" is reduced to patterns of eccentricity, Murdoch *does* convey the fruitlessness of acting upon one's fantasies when dealing with other human beings. However, given the sort of individuals she offers, it is easy to see why they are so elusive of understanding.

Murdochian people are in a "muddle." To enter her novels is to be thrown into a hopeless tangle of disintegrating marriages, love affairs, lives, and lingering deaths. The victims ponder the attitudes and events that brought them to their condition, but few answers emerge. The never-acted-upon cry of "We must *think*" underscores the tragedy of *A FAIRLY HONOURABLE DEFEAT.* This is the result of Murdoch's own fear of solipsism, of personal analysis that may unmask oneself but veil others: [24] and it is in this way that she fails in "expelling" herself from her art. Tolerance is not illuminating, and almost every Murdoch novel is a puzzler as no detective novel could hope to be. Yet there is value in her confusion because, in conspicuously operating from no profound moral construct, Murdoch makes the strongest possible case for the necessity of such a foundation. Her people, hating with some reason, loving with none, are lost as no rational person would want to be. They are examples in reverse. They are, too, the kind of characters Ayn Rand tries to portray in her novels, and cannot.

RAND'S WORLD

There is as much a "world" peculiar to Rand's novels as to Murdoch's. Nathaniel Branden asserts that her heroes are heroes "all of the time," [25] but Dominique, afraid of the world, tries to destroy her happiness and Roark's career; Hank Rearden, still accepting a conventional moral code, is contemptuous of his desire for Dagny; Francisco, Ragnar, Dagny, all have to be convinced by John Galt to do what he did without a second thought. Only Howard Roark and John Galt are untouched by value conflicts, are never seen in the process of "becoming" but simply "are." Closest to them is Kira Argounova, whose conflict between loyalty to Leo and an alliance with Andrei that would save Leo's life is contained in a few short paragraphs and resolved by the vision of a horribly dying woman. The conflict, once reduced to life versus death, requires no further agonizing. It is these characters, *un*muddled, living to think almost as much as thinking to live, who exhilarate the visitor to their world.

Yet, because they are "givens," they do not satisfy completely. Why are Dagny and James Taggart, with the same heritage, opposites? Why can Kira fight her environment but Catherine cannot? Why does Hank Rearden need John Galt and Galt need no one? Despite Ellsworth Toohey's confessions and Galt's broadcast, Rand offers no deeper explanation than one of "will." Some people chose reason, some do not. She simply cannot imagine the *minds* of her villains and is driven to protraying them through "whining" voices, "glazed and dead" eyes, or "shapeless features." She dismisses them as non-thinkers and divorces them from her sphere of understanding. It is left for a Murdoch to reveal what is, or can be, behind those "glazed and dead" eyes, and her muddled people are as devastatingly drawn as are Rand's heroes.

A final contrast can be made between their treatments of the theme of freedom versus slavery. For Rand, freedom is individual sovereignty; for Murdoch, it is "knowing and understanding and respecting things quite other than ourselves." [26] Thus, where Rand's heroes are fighting to disengage themselves from others, Murdoch's are struggling to find the "decent" way of dealing with all who make claims on them. It is a losing battle, and here, perhaps, Rand is the more realistic of the two. But Rand, in denying the potency of evil, sets up straw villains: it is their numbers that make them obstacles. Murdoch prefers to establish a single demon, as Mischa Fox in *THE FLIGHT FROM THE ENCHANTER* or Julius King in *A FAIRLY HONOURABLE DEFEAT,* and show how they trade on the conscientiousness of their victims in order to destroy them. Murdoch's people will never understand themselves: that is their tragedy. Rand's will never understand the demons and muddlers: that is theirs.

RECONCILIATION?

The temptation now is to assume that where two artistic visions complement each other, they may engage in a form of literary cross-pollination. Granted, consciousness of self does not inhibit consciousness of others, and in believing it does, Murdoch denies her characters the very inde-

"Rand simply cannot imagine the minds of her villains . . . she dismisses them as nonthinkers."

pendence she wishes for them. Granted, too, Rand's villains would gain in credibility if they were allowed some form of mental activity. But it is the two views of the human condition, one of nobility, unquestioned values, form; another of muddling, moral searching, contingency, that cannot co-exist in a single literary expression. Such an expression could incorporate varieties of men, but not of *man*. So Ayn Rand and Iris Murdoch cannot be reconciled, but it is not reasonable to ask of every writer the same vision, only that they see, and tell us, that we may see.

An answer to our initial question begins to take shape. Graham Hough in *THE DREAM AND THE TASK* defines literary criticism as "the means by which attention is called to new work and recalled to old" and adds that "those who have the advantage of special perceptiveness, special knowledge or special study should make it generally available: that whatever insight and intelligence exists on literary matters should be in general currency and exchange."[27] It is the *implicitness* of art that entices the critic: where the vision is explained and not alluded to there is precious little room for him to practice his craft. Iris Murdoch, in tucking herself away in minor, unsympathetic characters,[28] in relying heavily on classical myth to suggest relationships, in personifying many philosophical schemes, demands elucidation. Rand, in openly identifying with her heroes, in condensing all philosophical systems into one and setting up hers in opposition, in severely limiting her use of myth and symbol, requires none. What does remain for the critic is to compare her with her contemporaries, to make use of her self-placement in the Romantic tradition and consider her claims; in short, to acknowledge her identity as a writer of ideas.

As noted earlier, the nature of Rand's philosophy, couched as it is in unapologetic terms and running contrary to ordinary morality, has no doubt caused many critics to dismiss her as a philosopher using literature; this is unfair. Hough writes, "To confine the novel and criticism of the novel to the mere corroboration of values that we already accept is a disastrous narrowing of their range of action."[29] Yet, ironically, Ayn Rand is both victim and perpetrator of this very behavior. She suffers certainly in the first role, perhaps not so much now while she is still writing and has, consciously or not, cultivated a legend which draws young people to her work, but in the future, when there will be no body of criticism to call attention to her novels, no statement by her contemporaries of her relation to her age. She can survive critical dismissal, but she does not deserve the handicap. Hopefully, in her time, it will be removed. ◻

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] A. S. Byatt, *DEGREES OF FREEDOM* (Barnes and Noble 1965); Rubin Rabinovitz, *IRIS MURDOCH* (Columbia University Press 1968); Peter Wolfe, *THE DISCIPLINED HEART* (University of Missouri Press 1966).
[2] See Nathaniel Branden, *WHO IS AYN RAND?* (Paperback Library, Inc. 1964). The book is not pure literary criticism. Also, in a *REASON* interview (October 1971), Nathaniel Branden expressed dissatisfaction with it.
[3] Iris Murdoch, "The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited," *THE YALE REVIEW* December 1959, p. 269.
[4] *Id.* at p. 271.
[5] *Id.* at p. 267.
[6] *Id.* at p. 257.
[7] *Id.* at p. 265.
[8] Iris Murdoch, "Against Dryness," *ENCOUNTER* January 1961, p. 16.
[9] *Id.* at p. 17.
[10] *Id.* at p. 20.
[11] *Id.* at p. 20.
[12] Ayn Rand, *THE ROMANTIC MANIFESTO* (The New American Library, Inc. 1971), p. 64.
[13] *Id.* at p. 127.
[14] See Arthur Koestler, *THE GHOST IN THE MACHINE* (Macmillan 1968) for physiological material on the evolution of the human brain that casts doubt on Rand's contentions.
[15] Rand, *supra* note 12, pp. 74-75.
[16] Iris Murdoch, "The Sublime and the Good," *CHICAGO REVIEW* Autumn 1959, p. 51.
[17] Rand, *supra* note 12, pp. 48-49.
[18] *Id.* at p. 19.
[19] Murdoch, *supra* note 3, p. 271.
[20] *Id.* at p. 271.
[21] Rand, *supra* note 12, p. 48.
[22] *Id.* at p. 49.
[23] The contrast between cultivated and wild roses in *AN UNOFFICIAL ROSE,* Murdoch's sympathies being with the latter, bears out the image at its most obvious. Indeed, gardens play as important a role in Murdoch's novels as do machines in Rand's. Morgan and Peter in *A FAIRLY HONOURABLE DEFEAT* are delighted to discover a railway bed being reclaimed by nature; Hank and Dagny are sickened by a similar sight during their search for the motor.
[24] See R. Rabinovitz, *IRIS MURDOCH.*
[25] Branden, *supra* note 2, p. 54
[26] Murdoch, *supra* note 3, p. 270.
[27] Graham Hough, *THE DREAM AND THE TASK* (W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1964), p. 73.
[28] Rabinovitz, *supra* note 1, p. 44.
[29] Hough, *supra* note 27, p. 56.

VERSES!

Serious poets
To me are a curse;
I only write light stuff
For better or verse.

Dennis J. Chase

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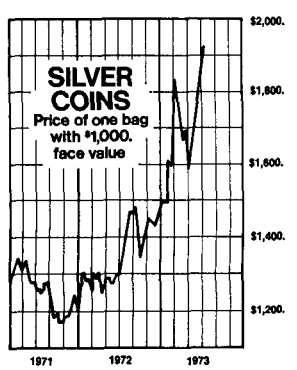

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Atheism & Objectivism

George H. Smith

In many circles in contemporary American society, the mere mention of "atheism" frequently evokes an emotionally-charged reaction. Yet atheism is as deserving of dispassionate analysis as is capitalism, socialism or communism. As Mises and Rothbard have shown, a rational approach to economics leads to an awareness of the inherent irrationality (in terms of production and distribution) of an economic system which relies on central planning instead of the market system. Obviously, to effectively argue the case against socialism, it will not suffice to rely on faith, emotion and prejudice.

In short, all aspects of human action—including economics and religion—merit rational analysis.

In his article on Atheism and Objectivism, George Smith sets forth a calm treatment of the subject of atheism. We expect this article to be of special interest to those of our readers who have not previously been aware of the major philosophical differences which exist among different forms of atheism.

The atheism of Ayn Rand is regarded by many people, especially political conservatives, as the most pernicious aspect of Objectivism. Yet, though vehemently opposed to faith and mysticism, Rand has never placed much emphasis on atheism per se. The Objectivist position on atheism was summarized by Nathaniel Branden in the December 1965 issue of *THE OBJECTIVIST NEWSLETTER:*

> As uncompromising advocates of reason, Objectivists are, of course, atheists. We are intransigent atheists, not militant ones. We are *for* reason; therefore, as a consequence, we are opposed to any form of mysticism; therefore, we do not grant any validity to the notion of a supernatural being. But atheism is scarcely the center of our philosophical position. To be known as crusaders for atheism would be acutely embarrassing to us; the adversary is too unworthy.

The significance of Ayn Rand's atheism lies not in her atheism as such, but in its philosophical underpinnings. Rand is not unique in her atheism, but she is unique, in several important respects, in the philosophical orientation from which her atheism is derived. Rand's atheism distinguishes her from many other atheists as well as from religionists. It is for this reason that the charges of nihilism and pessimism leveled at some forms of atheism—sometimes legitimately—simply have no applicability to Rand whatsoever.

Atheism has been defended from a number of different philosophical perspectives, and the fact that a person is an atheist does not necessarily mean that he has something significantly in common with other atheists. Philosophers who differ from Rand in

crucially important areas have, nonetheless, defended atheism. Existentialists, Marxists, Logical Positivists, Linguistic Analysts—all of these, to name but a few, have defended some form of atheism. But many of these approaches offer weak or invalid defenses of atheism, or they defend atheism at an enormously high cost, such as rejecting theism as a corollary of rejecting metaphysical inquiry altogether. Thus, in the course of examining Objectivist atheism, I shall outline other approaches to atheism, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses, and I shall contrast these approaches with that of Objectivism.

THEISM VS. ATHEISM

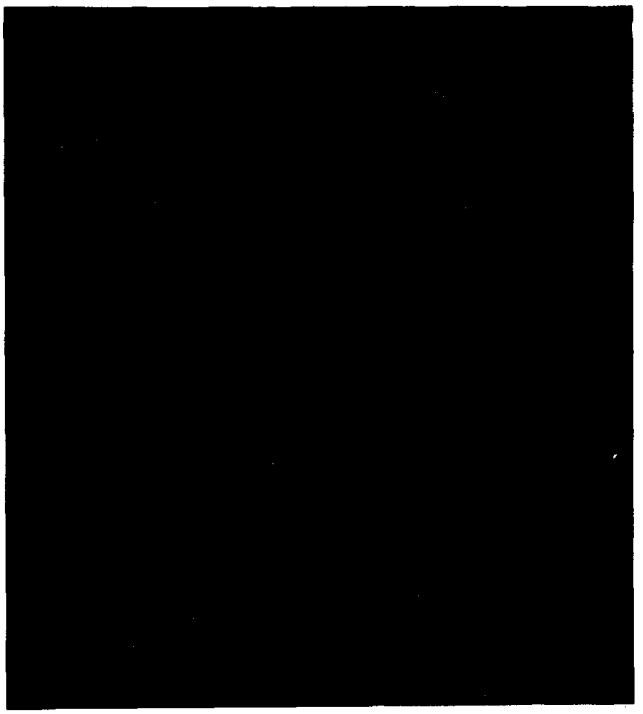
Before proceeding, it is necessary to specify briefly what I mean by the terms "theism" and "atheism." "Theism" is the belief in a god or in any number of gods. But what is a god? This can be a rather complex question, but, for the purpose of this discussion, I shall consider a god to be any *supernatural being*—any being, in other words, that is "above" or "beyond" natural law. A god is exempt from some or all of the natural laws that characterize entities existing within the framework of the natural universe.

It is important to note that in order for a being to qualify as a god in this sense, it is not enough that it be superior to man in terms of its attributes and capacities. It is possible that we may eventually discover some kind of superior life on another planet, but these creatures, since they would be subject to natural law, would not qualify as gods. Nor does the fact that one man is extraordinarily strong make him a god in relation to weaker men. If the dispute between theism and atheism is to have any philosophical significance, a god must differ from natural beings in *kind,* not merely in degree.

A theist, therefore, is a person who believes in the existence of a supernatural being; and, because the supernatural lies beyond man's comprehension, a theist also believes in the existence of the unknowable.

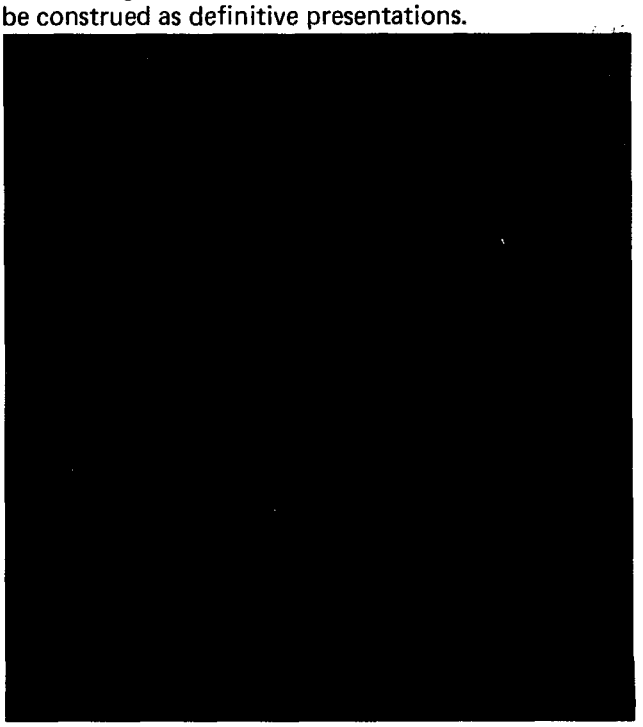
What is atheism? The prefix "a" is a term of negation or privation and means "without," so the term "atheism" literally means "without theism," or "without belief in a god or gods." One who does not believe in the existence of a god or supernatural being is properly designated as an atheist.

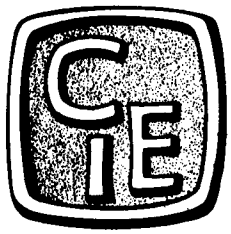
Atheism is sometimes defined as the belief that there is no god of any kind, or the claim that a god cannot exist. While these are categories of atheism, they do not exhaust the meaning of atheism, and they are somewhat misleading with respect to the basic nature of atheism. Atheism, in its basic form, is not a belief; it is the *absence* of belief. An atheist is not primarily a person who believes that a god does not exist; rather, he does *not believe* in the existence of a god.



An atheist, therefore, is a person who does not believe in the existence of a supernatural being; and, as a corollary, an atheist is one who does not believe in the existence of anything outside or beyond the knowable universe.

With this admittedly brief presentation of theism and atheism, we shall now examine some of the ways in which atheism manifests itself. Please remember that in dividing the varieties of atheism as I am about to do, it is sometimes necessary to simplify matters a great deal, so none of the following should be construed as definitive presentations.





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ETHICAL APPROACH

The first form of atheism I shall call **ethical atheism,** by which I mean the rejection of theistic belief for ethical reasons. This approach is typical of *existentialist atheism,* such as promulgated by Sartre and Camus, whose position may be summarized as follows: If God existed, life would not be absurd and meaningless. Life is absurd and meaningless; therefore, God does not exist. In the name of misery, anxiety and helplessness, existentialists have espoused atheism.

"Atheism is not a belief; it is the absence of belief. An atheist is not primarily a person who believes that a god does not exist; rather, he does not believe in the existence of a god."

A major theme in existentialism is human freedom, and the existence of a god, it is claimed, would jeopardize this freedom. At first glance, this position appears to have merit, but this merit soon disappears upon closer examination. By freedom, existentialists do not mean simply the freedom to choose one's own values; they mean, in effect, the freedom to choose one's own nature. Man, according to existentialism, is born into an absurd, meaningless world, without purpose and without values. Man exists, but he is without an essence. His existence precedes his essence. This, understandably, fills him with dread and despair; and to escape the inherent meaninglessness of life, man must, through freely chosen commitment, shape his own essence.

Where Objectivism says that man should freely select his values according to a rational standard of value—a standard determined by man's nature—existentialism says that each man must choose his own standard of value. Each man must decide for himself, through some unspecified and presumably arbitrary means, what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong. Good and evil depend solely on individual choice; existentialists are overt defenders of ethical subjectivism, and it is in the name of this subjectivism that they reject God.

To introduce God into the universe would be to introduce a kind of objectivism into ethics, because the good would become synonymous with God's decrees. With this universal standard of goodness, man would no longer be free to choose his own subjective good. In more blunt terms, existentialists reject theism because the existence of God would eliminate ethical caprice, and caprice is essential to the ethics of existentialism. There is a very important

"Objectivist atheism stresses, but did not originate, the idea that the term 'god' must be defined before any attempt is made to establish its existence."

sense in which "freedom," for the existentialist, means freedom from the facts of reality, and it is in behalf of this kind of freedom that he defends atheism.

With ethical atheism of the existentialist variety, we see a paradigm of what is the most disastrous move, philosophically speaking, that an atheist can make: to defend atheism in the name of subjectivism. *Ethical subjectivism,* or the denial of objective ethical standards, is only a step removed from *ethical nihilism,* or the obliteration of ethics altogether. To defend atheism solely in the name of subjectivism is to grant theism an honor which it does not deserve; it is to imply that theism is on the side of reason in ethics, while atheism is basically antireason. When atheism is the consequence of a general nihilistic attitude, as it is in existentialism, then it is not an atheism which is in any sense desirable.

There are, of course, other forms of ethical atheism that do not defend subjectivism. Some atheists, such as Eric Fromm, have criticized theism on the grounds that it advocates authoritarianism in the sphere of morality, and this Fromm regards, rightly, as antithetical to human happiness and autonomy. But any variety of ethical atheism, whether it defends subjectivism or objectivism, is on weak theoretical grounds, because the ethical consequence of theism is a secondary issue beside the issue of truth and falsehood. *Can the belief in a god be justified rationally?* If so, one should be a theist. If not, one should be an atheist. The existence of a god would indeed have unfortunate consequences for morality—especially if this god were the God of traditional Christianity—but these unfortunate consequences do not, in themselves, provide grounds for the rejection of theism. The issue of ethical implications should arise only after the rationality of theistic belief has been determined.

Another kind of atheism is **psychological atheism,** which means the rejection of theistic belief through an explanation of its psychological origins. A little known philosopher who took this approach was Ludwig Feuerbach, a nineteenth century German philosopher who greatly influenced such men as Nietzsche, Marx and Freud. In *THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY,* Feuerbach argued that the belief in a god represents man's highest aspirations in an otherworldly form. Man dehumanizes his ideals, such as love, strength and wisdom, and places them in a supernatural realm under the name of God. But this alienates man from these ideals, making them seem unattainable and appropriate only to God. Thus, according to Feuerbach, we should reject God, but not the divine attributes themselves. These should be returned to the natural world, within the grasp of man, where they properly belong. (Freud used a variant of this approach, postulating the desire for a father image as the origin of religious belief. "God," wrote Freud, "is at bottom nothing but an exalted father.")

Without considering the validity of these psychological pronouncements, it is important to recognize that they constitute invalid grounds for atheism. They commit what is known as the "genetic fallacy," which means the attempted refutation of a belief through an appeal to its psychological origins. How a person acquired his beliefs does not affect their present cognitive value, as long as he is willing to present arguments in their favor. Psychologizing is not the business of a philosopher, and to explain the psychological origins of religious belief does not constitute a philosophical refutation. Any variant of psychological atheism, even if its psychological analysis is correct, simply misses the point. It is an altogether incorrect approach to atheism.

Next we come to what may be called, for lack of a better name, **sociological atheism.** This is the doctrine, prominent in many nineteenth century socialists and anarchists, that religion has served as a repressive force throughout history, aligning with the ruling class and providing it with a justification for its atrocities. According to Engels, God represents "the alien domination of the capitalist mode of production." "Slaves of God," wrote Bakunin in *GOD AND THE STATE,* "men must also be slaves of Church and State, in so far as the State is consecrated by the Church."

While it is true that churches have often exerted influence through the power of the state, this is an issue of political theory, not of atheism. The fact that Christians have practiced torture and repression does not refute theistic belief, any more than comparable behavior by Communists refutes atheism. Even if no Christian had ever harmed another man, Christian theism would still not be true. Like ethical and psychological atheism, sociological atheism attacks theism on nonphilosophical, and therefore incorrect, grounds.

"DEATH OF GOD" THEOLOGY

Another general approach to atheism may be described as **pragmatic atheism.** This is the belief that, while theism may have fulfilled man's needs in the past, it is no longer sufficient for that task. In other words, belief in a god is deemed no longer "useful" and is therefore rejected on pragmatic grounds.

"With Objectivism and Thomism we have two philosophical movements claiming Aristotle as their intellectual ancestor, but who stand on opposite ends of the spectrum regarding religious belief."

This approach is so nebulous and philosophically inept that it is rarely defended explicitly. There are strains of it, however, in that modern, absurd spectacle known as "Death of God" theology, whose advocates claim that a transcendent god is no longer relevant to the requirements of contemporary men, and that God is thus dead, at least in the traditional sense. Pragmatic atheism is also sometimes defended by the untrained, armchair philosopher who wants to offer an apparently sophisticated reason for his atheism, so he tells us that theistic belief is not useful or relevant—without specifying, of course, his criteria of usefulness and relevance, and without specifying what all this has to do with the rational basis for theistic belief.

There is hopefully no need to comment on this approach in detail. Pragmatic atheism evades completely the issue of truth and falsehood, not to mention its suggestion that theistic belief was at one time "useful," which extends to theism undeserved credit.

Another variety of atheism is **metaphysical atheism,** or the rejection of theism on metaphysical grounds. This approach is most often found in strict materialists, such as Baron d'Holbach (1723-1789) and Karl Marx. According to materialistic atheism, only matter exists. But God is allegedly immaterial; therefore, God does not exist.

Within certain limits, this approach may have some merit—at least more than the approaches discussed thus far—but as used by most materialists, it has unfortunate implications. When reductive materialists say that only matter exists, they rule out, not only God, but consciousness and conceptual thought as well. Consciousness, according to strict materialists, is reducible to physical movements in the brain. Other materialists take a moderate position, claiming that consciousness is not synonymous with physical events, but is a byproduct of matter. In any case, metaphysical atheism, whatever form it may take, tends to be a weak defense, primarily for the reason that it shifts the burden of proof from the theist to the atheist. The metaphysical atheist must now demonstrate that only matter exists, and his atheism depends on the effectiveness of this demonstration. In a proper defense of atheism, however, the onus of proof resides entirely with the theist; and the metaphysical atheist, by shifting this responsibility, places himself in a precarious position.

Finally, we come to the most significant variety of atheism, and the variety of which Objectivism is a subcategory. This is **epistemological atheism,** or the rejection of theism on epistemological grounds. It is epistemological atheism that delves into such issues as the meaning of theistic terms and the evidence in their favor.

Most contemporary atheists are epistemological atheists, and there are many subcategories of this approach. First, there is *skeptical atheism,* which stems from a generally skeptical attitude regarding the possibility of any objective knowledge whatsoever, whether of God or anything else. Of course, if one can't know anything, then one can't know of God's existence, and atheism follows inevitably—but this is a disastrously high price to pay in defense of atheism, not to mention that it is an absurd position to maintain.

Although not himself an atheist, the eighteenth-century philosopher David Hume laid the foundation for skeptical atheism in many important respects. Hume did not deny the possibility of all knowledge, but he did uphold certain epistemological positions which, if carried to their logical extremes, lead inevitably to epistemological nihilism. This is not to deny Hume's contributions to the critique of theism—his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion,* for example, is a masterful work—but many of Hume's criticisms of religion are based on a more basic critique of human knowledge in general. For instance, one of Hume's most famous doctrines is his denial that the principle of necessity in causation has any factual basis. Belief in causality, for Hume, is the result of psychological conditioning, and the idea of a necessary connection between events in nature is without ontological foundation. There is nothing logically impossible, Hume believed, involved in a cat giving birth to baby elephants. We don't see such things happening, so we assume that they are impossible; but we must recognize, argued Hume, that this is mere psychological prejudice on our part, with no metaphysical foundation.

Many alleged proofs for the existence of a god rest on causal inferences, such as the supposed inference we must make to a first cause of the universe. But if causal inference in general is invalid, as Hume maintained, then none of these theistic arguments can be valid. Such theistic demonstrations, therefore, are doomed to failure—and this is one of the ways in which Hume attacked so-called natural theology. In the process of this attack, however, every other argument that rests on causal inference—whether theistic or naturalistic—is doomed as well. Here we have an example of excluding theism as a byproduct of excluding a very important segment of human knowledge in general.

SKEPTICISM AND FAITH

It must be stressed that epistemological

skepticism, while providing a superficial defense of atheism, works more in favor of theism than atheism. If it is impossible to justify our knowledge claims, then one belief becomes as good as any other. The theist cannot justify his beliefs, but, according to skepticism, neither can the atheist. Skepticism invites everyone to play it deuces wild in regard to knowledge claims; and the belief in a god becomes as defensible—or, more accurately, as indefensible—as any other.

Consider the fact that most forms of theistic belief rely heavily on the concept of *faith.* Consider also that skepticism is the precursor of faith; it opens the door that makes faith possible. He who defends skepticism sets the stage for faith.

Suppose that one maintains that every claim to knowledge must meet the minimum requirements of rational demonstration or be rejected as irrational. This, which is the position of the antiskeptic, excludes the possibility of faith; there is no room for faith in such a scheme. Suppose, however, that one maintains that many claims to knowledge can never, in principle, be justified. This, which is the position of the skeptic, leaves an opening for faith. Since we cannot justify our beliefs rationally, argues the theist, we must rely on faith. The Christian will frequently defend his faith in God on the grounds that the atheist too is a man of faith, except that the faith of the atheist lies in the material world and reason, rather than in the immaterial world and God. The Christian will thus claim that the position of the atheist is no stronger than his own.

If the atheist relies on skepticism, it will inevitably turn against him and be used as a major defensive ploy by the theist. It is the theist, not the atheist, who must align with skepticism.

Another prominent variety of epistemological atheism stems from the school of philosophy known as *logical positivism.* Logical positivism is now out of style in contemporary circles, but its influence is still felt. Its most famous doctrine was the principle of verification, which stated that the meaning of a proposition is its manner of verification in experience; and any proposition that cannot be verified in sense experience is literally meaningless.

In *LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC,* the bible of logical positivism published in 1936, A. J. Ayer argued that "to say that 'God exists' is to make a metaphysical utterance which cannot be either true or false. And no sentence which purports to describe the nature of a transcendent god can possess any literal significance." As indicated by this passage, theism was rejected by positivists as a corollary of their rejection of metaphysical inquiry altogether. God was discarded, but so were such topics as causality, natural law and ethics. In fact, most logical positivists held that ethical judgments are cognitively meaningless; and this later evolved into the theory known as *emotivism,* or the doctrine that ethical judgments are nothing more than expressions of emotion. The atheism of logical positivism was another instance of throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

Next we come to the atheism of that school of thought known as **linguistic analysis,** or "ordinary language philosophy." Analysts are united primarily by their common conception of the nature and scope of philosophy. According to linguistic philosophy, the primary function of philosophy, and perhaps the only function, should be the analysis and clarification of language. The endless and confusing problems of past philosophers, claim the analysts, can be resolved through linguistic exploration—exploration that will reveal widespread misuse of language. A person who pays close attention to language will not become embroiled in the many pseudo-problems that have perplexed traditional philosophers.

LANGUAGE AND MEANING

A predominantly analytic approach to atheism is presented in Antony Flew's excellent book, *GOD AND PHILOSOPHY,* which is similar to Objectivism's approach in many respects. Analytic philosophy has its good points and its bad points, which may be summarized as follows.

On its positive side, analytic philosophy has stressed that the meaning of theistic terms, such as "god," must precede any judgment of truth or

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falsehood regarding theistic claims. Before we can determine the truth or falsehood of the proposition, "God exists," we must understand the meaning of "god." If no intelligible description or definition is forthcoming, the case for theism collapses. Some analysts have also attacked the pompous and verbose terminology that is so typical of theology, and this is another respect in which analytic philosophy has performed a valuable task in defense of atheism.

On the negative side, however, many analysts have severely restricted the scope and, consequently, the importance of philosophy. Whereas medieval theologians made philosophy into the handmaiden of theology, analysts have transformed philosophy into the handmaiden of language. Language, not reality as a whole, is made the subject matter of philosophy, and philosophy is reduced to a kind of linguistic therapy.

An unfortunate consequence of this reliance on language is that analytic philosophy sometimes functions as a defense of the status quo, linguistically speaking. Starting from the manner in which language is ordinarily used, it becomes extremely difficult for analysts to discard certain words that have been used for thousands of years, such as the term "god." This has been recognized by some theists, who have subsequently enlisted the aid of linguistic analysis. Religious propositions, these theists argue, have been used by millions of persons for thousand of years, so they must serve some legitimate function. It is not within the province of philosophy to discard them as ridiculous or nonsensical; rather, we must accept these religious propositions as given and proceed to analyze what people have meant by them. It is in this way that ordinary language philosophy opened another door for theism.

RAND'S ATHEISM

Our last variety of epistemological atheism is *Objectivist atheism.* As mentioned previously, there are some similarities between Objectivist atheism and a few of the approaches discussed thus far. For example, Objectivist atheism stresses, but did not originate, the idea that the term "god" must be defined before any attempt is made to establish its existence. This is also true of the "onus of proof principle," or the idea that the burden of proof falls entirely on the theist to establish his case rationally, and that the atheist is obliged to do nothing more than answer theistic arguments. There is no "positive case" for atheism. If theistic arguments fail, theism fails, and atheism emerges as the only rational alternative.

Despite these common grounds, Objectivism differs radically from most other forms of atheism. The most important difference is that, unlike most atheists, Rand is an Aristotelian. Although much of Objectivism (especially its metaphysics) differs significantly from Aristotelian philosophy, Rand falls generally with the Aristotelian tradition, particularly with regard to her view of philosophy, the nature of human cognition, and the role of ethics in man's existence.

The emergence of an Aristotelian atheist on today's scene appears somewhat paradoxical, because the staunchest contemporary defenders of Aristotle are the Thomists—the Catholic followers of Thomas Aquinas, the great medieval theologian who was largely responsible for the reintroduction of Aristotle into Western Civilization. With Objectivism and Thomism we have two philosophical movements claiming Aristotle as their intellectual ancestor, but who stand on opposite ends of the spectrum regarding religious belief.

It is very much due to her Aristotelianism that Rand is unique in her atheism. For one thing, she opposes the general trends of positivism and analytic philosophy, opting instead for a much wider conception of philosophy as the discipline that provides man with a systematic and fundamental knowledge of reality. And, unlike most atheists, Rand is explicitly antiskeptical in her epistemology. Her rejection of God does not stem from the limitation or distrust of reason; rather, it is in the name of reason that she rejects faith, mysticism and belief in the supernatural.

Rand's advocacy of reason extends into the sphere of ethics. Unlike many atheists, Rand rejects the supposed dichotomy between values and facts, arguing that the values required by man derive from the facts of his nature—a notion that has strong Aristotelian overtones. In virtually every area of philosophy, Rand is what may be called a *philosophical optimist;* she projects strong confidence in the ability of man's mind to acquire knowledge of reality. Nowhere in Rand will one find the pessimism so typical of existentialist atheism, or the skepticism inherent in Humean and positivistic atheism, or the philosophical myopia of analytic atheism.

In short, the atheism of Ayn Rand is not destructive in the least. In rejecting God, Rand does not reject metaphysics, ethics, certainty, or the possibility of happiness. On the contrary, it is because Rand has so much of positive value to offer that she considers atheism to be a comparatively minor issue.

The Thomistic philosopher Etienne Gilson once remarked that "God will really be dead when no one will still think of denying his existence." By emphasizing her constructive philosophy to the extent that the issue of theism fades into the background, Ayn Rand may be said to have written God's epitaph. And this time there will be no resurrection. ◻

George H. Smith studied philosophy at the University of Arizona. He is author of the book ATHEISM: THE CASE AGAINST GOD, *forthcoming from Nash Publishing Corp. He co-edits the libertarian magazine* INVICTUS, *and has contributed to* REASON, BOOKS FOR LIBERTARIANS, *and* BOOK NEWS.

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Resolving the Government Issue

Roger Bissell

Ayn Rand is noted for her outspoken political philosophy. Yet there is no substantial agreement as to precisely what is her definition of government, nor what her statements about government *mean.*

Questions and disagreements have arisen specifically over the meaning and ramifications of certain phrases in her principal writings about government. In this article, I propose to identify those meanings and ramifications, by way of considering what Rand means by the term "a *proper* government."[1]

THE CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENTS AND PHRASES

In her essay "The Nature of Government," Rand makes two statements which at least resemble definitions:

(G1) "A government is an institution that holds the exclusive power to *enforce* certain rules of social conduct in a given geographic area."[2]

(G2) "*A government is the means of placing the retaliatory use of physical force under*

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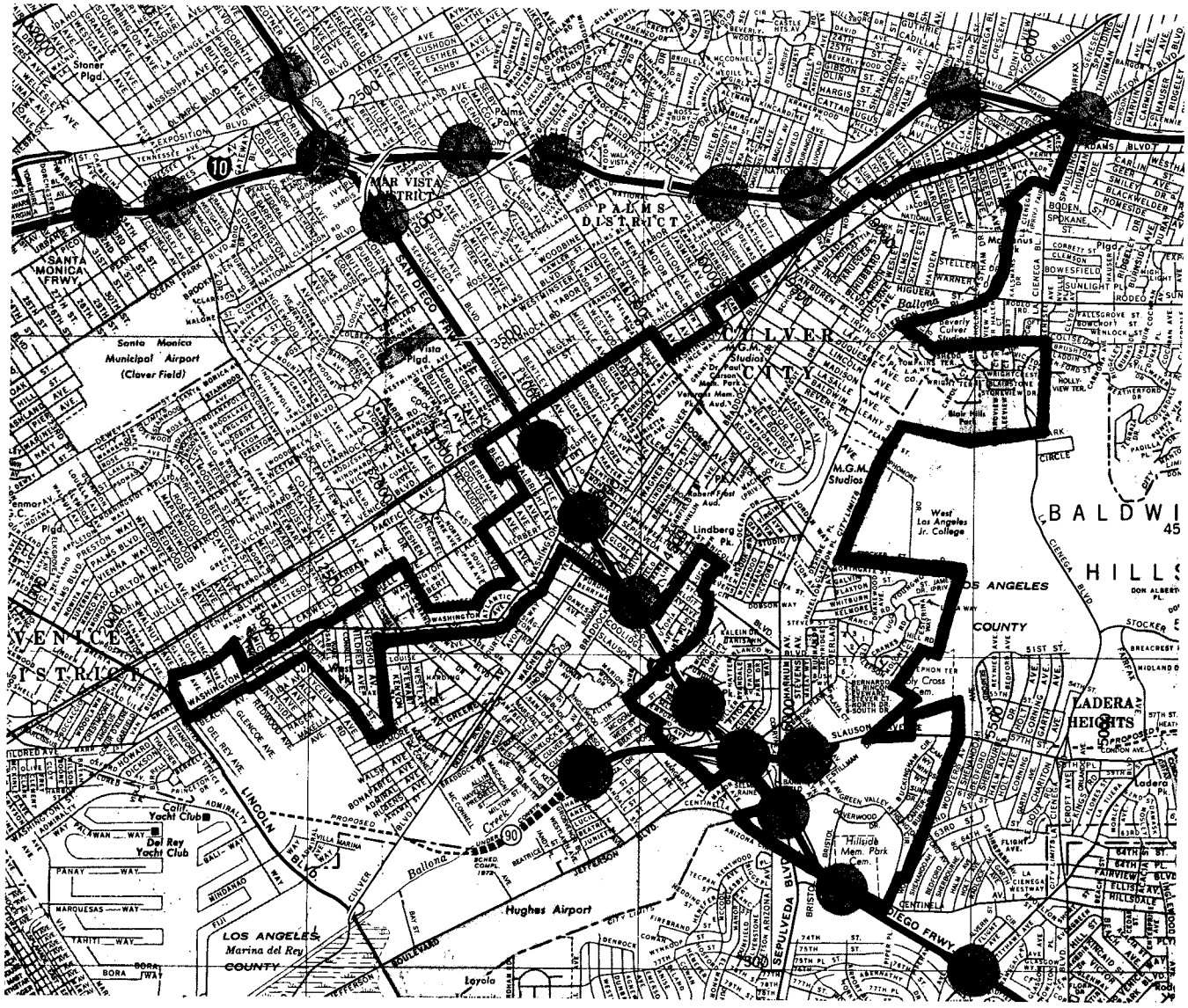

objective control—i.e., under objectively defined laws."[3]

Immediately preceding Statement (G2) in the text, is Rand's remark that protecting people's rights under an objective code of rules "is the task of a government—of a *proper* government—its basic task, its only moral justification and the reason why men do need a government."[4]

Here arise the disagreements over interpretations of her thesis. Is Statement (G2) actually the definition of "*proper* government"? And what does "proper" mean in this context? Is it synonymous with "good"? "Good" in what sense, and by what standard?

Or is Rand merely defining "government" in general? Is she thus making "proper government" synonymous with "government" as *she* defines it, using "proper" only as a superlative to distinguish things satisfying her definition from others which do not, yet which are commonly called "government"? Or is the possibility of some other meaning intended? Does *either* statement, (G1) or (G2) contain the necessary elements for a full and complete definition of the concept of "government"?

Consider the phrases "exclusive power" and "given geographical area" in Statement (G1). Does exclusivity of power necessarily rule out the possibility of competing governments in the same geographical area? Does the notion of competing governments in the same geographical area even make sense?

And what of the phrase "is the means of placing" in Statement (G2)? Does this mean that government's *actually have been used* this way? If so, then isn't that a wrong distinguishing characteristic to pick for the concept "government," since governments have always strongly tended toward *violating* rather than protecting men's rights?

"Rand's expression 'proper government' is actually a double-entendre, so to speak"

Or were such historical examples justifiably *called* "governments"? If not, then Statement (G2) seems to refer to nothing which has ever existed, and merely redefines the word "government" to make it inapplicable to reality! It designates what we call a *good* government, none of which exist according to Objectivist-Libertarian standards.

Or instead, does the phrase "is the means of placing" mean that government *can be used* in this way, regardless of whether and to what extent it actually has been? If so, why is *this* possible use regarded as the distinguishing characteristic, rather than, say, to provide public welfare?

The unresolved debate over these questions has caused a wide division among Libertarians and Objectivists. The issue is: what constitutes a moral political system? All these questions arise because Rand's definition (if it is one) of "Government" is much subtler than most people think.

As I have said, a central problem seems to be the precise role and meaning of the concept "proper", as Rand employs it in this context. The solution to that problem, provided below, will enable us to resolve the tangle of questions which have arisen, and will serve as the key to understanding her view of government.

"A 'given geographical area' (over which a single institution has sole jurisdiction) might be a number of spatially separated areas, rather than one monolithic region."

THE "PROPER" SOLUTION TO THE CONTROVERSIES

First, recall that Rand discusses the meaning of "proper" in a meta-ethical context in "The Objectivist Ethics":

> What standard determines what action is *proper* in this context? The standard is the organism's life, or: that which is required for the organism's survival.[5].

A "proper action", then, is one which is consistent with the requirements of an organism's survival, with its actual *needs.*

The concept "proper" is also applicable to the two basic aspects of human action: the *means*—the method or instrumentality by which the action is carried out—and the *end*—the goal or purpose of the action. Thus, a "proper object of action" is one of man's needs, that which will fulfill one of his survival requirements. And in relation to some given need of man, a "proper means" is that which will help him to obtain that end.

Now consider the context of Rand's discussion of government. She is asking: Why do people need a social-rule-enforcing institution? Why does a person need an institution which sets and enforces limits upon his actions and those of others?

The answer lies in man's basic social need: *justice,* the recognition and acceptance by others of his nature, of his requisite conditions for proper survival, namely, freedom from the initiation of physical force by others, in other words, the recognition of his rights. The means for fulfilling this need is, therefore, an institution which sets and enforces

limits upon everyone's actions, limits based upon the standard of man's rights.[6]

It is thus clear that Rand is treating government as one *subcategory* within the wider class of social-rule-enforcing institutions. (Observe that Statement (G1) does not assert that government is *the only* kind of social-rule-enforcing institution. If she had intended to make such an assertion, the article "the" would have been appropriate instead of "an".)

The criterion by which Rand differentiates what she regards as government from the other members of the wider class is whether or not people need them—i.e., whether they to any extent serve as the means by which man can fulfill his basic social need. If they do not help to fulfill that need then they are not classified by Rand as government.

Thus, contrary to the anarcho-capitalists' interpretation of Statement (G2)[7], a given institution may protect very few rights and violate many, or pursue some other mixed policy, and still be consistent with what Statement (G2) says about government.

An institution is thus classified as a government if it is the means of objectively controlling retaliatory force (protecting rights) to at least *some* extent. Once we have ascertained that a given institution does in fact meet this criterion for being a government, we then decide whether it is a good, bad, or mediocre government, according to the overall extent to which it objectively controls retaliatory force (i.e., protects rights).

It is important to recognize that Rand, in developing her concept of government, is challenging common usage, denying that certain things *commonly* called "government" are not essentially different from others in their ability to fulfill man's basic needs. Thus, her expression "proper government" is actually a double-entendre, so to speak.

In Rand's usage, the expression "proper government" is *redundant,* being synonymous with "government". The term "proper" in this sense serves only as a *clarifier*; there is no such thing as an "improper government", in Rand's usage.

But in common usage, the expression "proper government" is not redundant at all, but instead is *elliptical,* referring to proper *things commonly called "government".* In this sense, the term "proper" more than clarifies: it evaluates certain things commonly called "government" as being *proper to* (consistent with) man's basic social need. In this sense there *are* "improper governments": things *called* "government" which are *not proper* to man's basic social need.

It is now apparent that although neither of Rand's aforementioned statements about government is a definition, they each contain *some* of the necessary components of a correct definition, and they jointly contain *all* the necessary components. Statement (G1) specifies the *genus* of government, while Statement (G2) specifies the *differentia* of government.

On this basis, we can formulate a full and correct definition of government:

(G3) Government is the institution that holds the exclusive power to enforce certain rules of social conduct, *at least some of which are for the protection of men's rights* (i.e., the objective control of retaliatory force), in a given geographical area.

REMAINING PROBLEMS

We have now eliminated most of the problems which obstruct an understanding of Rand's concept of government as being consistent and correct. The only questions yet unresolved are those concerning the "geographical area" and "exclusive power" criteria in Statement (G1).

> *'Competition is part of the process of* seeking to govern *not part of the process of* governing, per se.''

Concerning the former criterion, it is possible that the given geographical area (over which a single institution exclusively enforces certain rules) might be a number of spatially separated areas, rather than one continuous region.[8] The tendency to visualize the "given geographical area" as one single, unbroken expanse, can be corrected by asking: *"Given—by what?"*

If the "givenness" is not to be totally arbitrary, restricted to continuous regions, then the "geographical area" criterion must mean: *the geographical area equivalent to the owned properties of those who choose to become and/or remain governed by the same institution.*

If interpreted in this way, the criterion would still apply to the case where a government over a continuous *country* forbids secession and the citizens choose to remain under its jurisdiction anyway, rather than revolt or move out. More important, it would allow for vastly more possibilities, all properly referred to as government.

For instance, there might be a pattern of spatially separate yet not too distant governed areas forming a patchwork. (Even in the United States, where we are forced to support the Federal, State and local governments, that is somewhat the case, and other private agencies perform governmental functions in the same "patchwork" pattern.)

But then how does this affect the latter criterion? In such a free, moral society, wouldn't various governments *compete* with one another? In one misleading sense, yes; they vie for the job of protecting their prospective citizens'/supporters'/

customers' rights and perhaps also enforcing other rules.

However, once the job is *assigned,* the geographical area of jurisdiction is set, regardless of how temporary that arrangement may be. The competition is part of the process of *seeking* citizens to govern, not part of the process of *governing, per se.* That is, only one agency actually governs at a given time and in a given respect.[9]

Thus, insofar as they are serving as governments, rather than merely seeking to become governments, *there is no such thing as competing governments in a given geographical area.* The notion is simply incoherent.[10]

In fairness, this is not what the anarcho-capitalists mean to say, if I understand them correctly. They maintain, rather, that institutions in the same general location can bid to become the government over two different geographical areas within this location, no matter how intertwined those areas may become due to the location of their customers' properties. Thus, they are merely describing two or more governments coexisting much as do the U.S. and Canada today, only in a somewhat more complicated geographical pattern.

This is not to deny the possibility of "overlapping or shared jurisdiction" between governments, in which, for instance, police offices from each government would cooperate and collaborate in apprehending criminals. Such cases, however, are examples of a higher-level governmental structure under which (part or all of) two or more other governments are subsumed.

(This does not preclude two governments, in taking joint action, temporarily merging into one, which itself has exclusive power of enforcement.)

There have been errors on both sides of the dispute. While many of the anarchists have been trying to project what geographical form the coexistence of different governments might take, if enough coercive barriers were removed, many of the limited governmentalists have been blind to that view, instead concentrating on flaws in the form in which the anarchists have *expressed* their projection.

A famous example of this error, unfortunately, is Rand's ill-considered example of Mr. Smith, a customer of Government A and his next-door neighbor, Mr. Jones, a customer of Government B.[11] What, after all, *is* the line between Mr. Smith's property and Mr. Jones' property in such a case—if not exactly equivalent to the international border, say, between the U.S. and Canada? (I invite the reader to draw his own conclusions as to whether it is impossible or even unlikely that Governments A and B could work out mutually satisfactory methods for settling disputes between their citizens.)

It is finally possible to lay the entire archy-anarchy debate to rest. As Rand has maintained, anarchy *is* "a naive floating abstraction".[12] The system the anarcho-capitalists propose, however, is not anarchy, nor is it competing governments in the same geographical area—it is merely a system of limited government(s), with the potential of being consistently moral. If both sides would only realize this, they could discard all of the false labels and work together of one mind and accord, to bring the ideal of such a governmental system into existence.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] The views expressed in this paper are based strictly upon my own understanding and interpretation of Rand's (and others') views, and are not to be construed as having her (or their) sanction or approval.
[2] Ayn Rand, *THE VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS* (Signet Books, New American Library, 1964), p. 107.
[3] *IBID,* p. 109.
[4] *IBID,* p. 109.
[5] *IBID,* p. 16.
[6] *IBID,* pp. 108-09.
[7] See L. A. Rollins, "Some Brief Comments and Questions about Machan's Governmentalism," *INVICTUS* No. 11, p. 20; also, Ronn Neff, "A Note on Machan's Anarchism," *INDIVIDUALIST,* March 1971, pp. 11-12.
[8] T. R. Machan, "A Note on Neff's Anarchism," *REASON,* January 1971, p. 19.
[9] *IBID,* p. 19.
[10] Rand, *VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS,* pp. 112-13.
[11] *IBID,* pp. 112-13.
[12] *IBID,* pp. 112-13.

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Ayn Rand's Promethean Heroes

John Cody

Ayn Rand has written four novels of consummate craft and vision: *WE THE LIVING* (1936), *ANTHEM* (British edition, 1938; American edition, 1946), *THE FOUNTAINHEAD* (1943), and *ATLAS SHRUGGED* (1957).[1] Yet today despite the publication of these four novels, noteworthy for their brilliant plotting, thematic grandeur and unity, penetrating analysis of character and motivation, stylistic virtuosity, complex structure, imagery, and content—all of which excellences have won their authoress a mass audience in the millions—Ayn Rand's reputation as a *literary artist* and serious novelist is in low critical esteem. Today some 37 years after her first novel *(WE THE LIVING)* and some 16 years after her latest and best *(ATLAS SHRUGGED)* Ayn Rand is virtually a literary outcast ignored or scorned in scholarly journals, books, and dissertations.[2]

Those few critics or intellectuals who deign to consider Rand's novels pay scanty attention to the works' literary values, which they judge nugatory, and prefer to criticize and condemn the ideational content of the works for its heresy.[3] The liberal journalist Nora Ephron brands *THE FOUNTAINHEAD* "a very silly book" because of its opposition to altruism and the welfare state and opines that "it is better read when one is young enough to miss the point." She dismisses *ATLAS SHRUGGED* as "a ridiculous book."[4] The late Whittaker Chambers, a Christian conservative, in a review celebrated for its hysteria and inaccuracies, pontificates: "*ATLAS SHRUGGED* can be called a novel only by devaluing the term."[5] Chambers devotes most of his review of *ATLAS SHRUGGED* to a denunciation both of the novel's "philosophic materialism" which ignores God and man's "tragic fate" and of its alleged advocacy of a dictatorship by "a technocratic elite." Chambers discerns in Rand's ideas a kinship to Hitler, Stalin, and even Carrie Nation, and delivers the following exegesis of the novel's tone: "From almost any page of *ATLAS SHRUGGED,* a voice can be heard, from painful necessity, commanding: 'To a gas chamber-go!' ".[6]

Even within the more congenial precincts of the libertarian community, Rand the literary artist is likewise neglected in favor of Rand the philosopher, ethician, or political theorist. The vacuum of literary criticism is nearly total with the conspicuous exceptions of Rand's *THE ROMANTIC MANIFESTO* together with other scattered writings and two literary essays in Nathaniel and Barbara Branden's *WHO IS AYN RAND?*[7]

It is my conviction that Ayn Rand's deserved literary repute will be recognized in the eyes of academic and professional critics only through patient and careful literary scholarship and publication. Today, 16 years after *ATLAS SHRUGGED,* a beginning is long overdue for studies into the literary craft of Ayn Rand. Posterity's estimate of Rand's historical stature will not focus *primarily* on her nonfiction and theoretical exposition of philosophical, ethical, and political ideas, but rather on the genius of her narrative fiction. As valuable as Rand's philosophical ideas are (especially in epistemology), these will serve as suggestive and fertile hints for more

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elaborated writings by others and not as the final word. Rand's novels, though, stand forth as a complete, self-contained, impressive literary monument without need of alteration. But posterity will estimate Rand's narrative achievement as more than mere cult books or mass entertainment only if objective and persuasive literary analysis can demonstrate that her novels are brilliant masterpieces *qua* literary art rather than artless propaganda.

Literary studies of Rand's narrative techniques are valuable, beyond salvaging Rand's maligned literary repute, in augmenting each reader's understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the novels which are not merely as "clear" but also as *"complex"* as Richard Halley's music (*A.S.* p. 21). Certainly Rand as a self-proclaimed rational, calculating craftsman deserves more careful reading and analysis to replace the subjective, emotive praise or scorn that dominates discussion of her fictional works. Psychologically, greater precision in our conceptual understanding of Rand's art will awaken increasingly complex and precise emotional responses to the novels.

RAND'S PROMETHEAN CRAFT AND VISION

My purpose in this article is twofold: to define and trace how Ayn Rand's characteristic rational, benevolent, and heroic "sense of life" or "Promethean *vision*" pervades her novels; and to examine the literary *craft* and selected techniques which communicate the individual themes flowing from Rand's Promethean vision of heroic humanism, using *ANTHEM* as a case in point. Rand's Promethean *vision* of man and his position in the world governs her selection of particular themes; the specific *theme* of each novel, in turn, governs every detail of her craft: plot, character, setting, structure, and imagery. The literary method employed in this discussion is that of rational contextualism: the logical analysis of the novel as an artistic, integrated, and organic whole, all of whose constituent elements (words, syntax, images, ideas, character, plot action, structure, and setting) function, and should therefore be coherently interpreted within, the context of theme and vision.

I have styled Rand's vision "Promethean" because she has self-consciously exploited and repeated the Greek legend of Prometheus in three of her novels (*ANTHEM,* p. 114; *THE FOUNTAINHEAD,* p. 679; and *ATLAS SHRUGGED,* p. 486) as a mythic paradigm of her sense of life. By "sense of life" or vision Rand designates "a preconceptual equivalent of metaphysics, an emotional, subconsciously integrated appraisal of man and of existence."[8]

Rand's literary vision or sense of life is that of "man worship": rational heroic humanism, the luminous and joyous affirmation of the grandeur and possibilities of human life when lived according to reason and self-interest. To convey the pulsating, intense experience of her worship of rational, purposeful, egoistic man, Rand, although an atheist, frequently exploits the "emotional connotations of height, uplift, nobility, reverence, grandeur"[9] that have traditionally been the monopoly of religion but which legitimately pertain to the moral ideal of rational humanism. Negatively expressed, her benevolent vision views man's metaphysical nature as not condemned to tragic, joyless futility in a meaningless "life" but rather as capable of and promising a life "without pain or fear or guilt." If one searches for a positive emotional counterpart in arts other than literature for a glimpse of her vision of "man worship", it may be found most impressively in the religious exaltation of such musical or artistic works as the self-assured and triumphant "Credo" from Gounod's Saint Cecilia Mass[10], much of Beethoven's assertive, rebellious music, Michelangelo's David, or the exuberant gravity of such sculptured Greek gods as the serenely majestic Apollo on the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia.

As a mythic symbol to communicate this vision of heroic god-like man, Rand employs Prometheus in three of her novels. The Greek myth of Prometheus is especially suited to accommodate Rand's image of rational and rebellious heroism.[11] Greek mythographers and dramatists, such as Aeschylus in his *PROMETHEUS BOUND,* relate two chief tales (generally combined) of Prometheus, who was a demigod or Titan. The first concerns Prometheus as the benefactor of mankind and its culture-hero who brought fire and the civilizing crafts of mathematics and language down from the heavens in defiance of the tyrant god Zeus. Zeus' vengeance against Prometheus occupies the second tale. Prometheus was chained to a wind-swept crag in the Caucasus where daily an eagle (or vulture) tore out and devoured the Titan's liver which miraculously regrew at night for the next day's torment. For Rand as an advocate of reason, the significant Greek name of Prometheus ("The Forethinker"), his identification with mind as opposed to brute force, his martyrdom for his values, and his creative and civilizing role as the light-bearer to humankind, make Prometheus the fitting heroic image to embody her vision of man.

> "My dearest one, it is not proper for men to be without names. There was a time when each man had a name of his own to distinguish him from all other men. So let us choose our names. I have read of a man who lived many thousands of years ago, and of all the names in these books, his is the only one I wish to bear. He took the *light of the gods* and he brought it to men, and he taught men to be gods. And he suffered for his deed as all *bearers of light* must suffer. His name was *Prometheus."*
>
> **(ANTHEM, 115)**

ANTHEM, although unique among Rand's novels in its novelette size, its first-person point of view, and its quasi-Biblical, quasi-Zarathusthran style, shares the common Promethean vision, motifs, and patterns that recur with thematic variation in the other novels. *ANTHEM,* Rand's second novel, serves as a paradigm of her Promethean vision with its narrative pattern of Promethean deliverance: the hero progresses from his status as Prometheus Bound to that of Prometheus Unbound and Prometheus the Fire-Bearer.

The novel's theme is the discovery, through the moral-educational and psychological progress by one rebellious hero, of the significance of the individual ego. The story's setting is a completely collectivized and altruistic society of the future. Built around the concept "We", in a manner resembling Eugene Zamiatin's antiutopian satire *WE, ANTHEM* projects a technologically retarded dystopia which has suppressed all vestiges of individuality including the taboo-word "I". The plot dramatizes the hero's self-discovery and the self-deliverance from both, both bodily and psychological bondage to such a society. So consistently antiindividualistic is this totalitarian state that the hero, like all other men, lacks an individualizing name and, being designated by the number "Equality 7-2521", is but an interchangeable and expendable cell in the organism "Society." The hero's education leads to the discovery of the ego-concept through the means of his chosen creative work (as an inventor of the light bulb, his Promethean gift of light to his "brothers"), romantic love with the "Golden One", and the appreciation of his own joy and "alone-ness" which enables him to distinguish his ego from the collective of his "brothers."

The novel's climax in Chapter 11, culminating in the hero's formulation of the ego-concept "I" is linked to the following denouement Chapter 12, where the hero rejects his numerical cipher and names himself "Prometheus."[12] In retrospect we perceive the apt identification between the hero and Prometheus, god of light. Both creative rebels offered the gift of light to man, were enchained, and escaped from bondage.

The interplay of light and religious imagery reinforces this Promethean theme of the *divine light-bearer's* self-liberation. Light images demarcate the steps by which the hero delivers both his body and soul from his bondage to the "We." His spiritual illumination begins in Chapter 1 with the feeble but "precious" light of the stolen candle in his tunnel-cave (p. 12); the conclusion of the same chapter conveys the hero's awakened peace of spirit through a light image: "[O]ur spirit is clear as a lake troubled by no eyes save those of the *sun.*" (pp. 35-36). In Chapter 2, the hero associates his nascent romantic values with light by naming his love the "Golden One" (p. 41) whose hair "was golden as the sun" (p. 38) and who drinks water that resembles "sparks of fire in the sun" (p. 42). In Chapter 3 the hero discovers the luminous "power of the sky" (p. 57), the principle of electricity, by which he later invents a crude light bulb, his "box of glass" (p. 63) in Chapter 5. Other light images culminate in the discovery of the radiant house of the Unmentionable Times:

> Then today, *at sunrise,* we saw a *white flame* among the trees, high on a sheer peak before us. We thought that it was a *fire* and we stopped. But the *flame* was unmoving, yet blinding as liquid metal. So we climbed toward it through the rocks and there, before us, on a broad summit, with the mountains rising before it, stood a house such as we had never seen, and the *white fire* came from the *sun* on the glass of its windows. (p. 101)

Later in the same Chapter 10, the excited and expectant hero cannot sleep contemplating the possible treasures contained in the wonderful house and its books. Gazing out from the window of the house onto a night landscape, he exploits Promethean light imagery to foreshadow the climactic discovery of the ego in the next two chapters:

> And now we look upon the earth and sky. This spread of naked rock and peaks and moonlight is like a world ready to be born, a world that waits. It seems to us it asks a sign from us, *a spark,* a first commandment. We cannot know what *word* we are to give, nor what great deed this earth expects us to witness. (p. 106).

In the two concluding chapters the newly discovered ego concept becomes the "guiding star" (p. 109) whose "beacon" (p. 122) will dispell the "night" and "darkness" of the selfless past (p. 121).[13]

Light imagery unites with the strand of religious imagery in the hero's precursor, the "Saint of the pyre" (p. 53). The "Saint", as a veritable martyred Prometheus-Bound figure, bestows on the young hero his first illuminating glimpse of true sanctity, despite the Saint's fiery punishment as a "Transgressor of the Unspeakable Word" (pp. 51-53).

Figure 1: BIPARTITE RING COMPOSITION IN *ANTHEM*

WORLD OF "WE": PROMETHEUS BOUND (Ch. 1-6)

1. *Prologue:* Hero's confused guilt over his ego/ Flashback on altruist City of "We"; "portals" of Palace of the World Council endorse religion of "We" (pp. 13-14)/ Hero's name is collectivist "Equality 7-2521" (p. 13).
2. Confused ego-values in hero's love of the "Golden One"/ "Saint of the pyre" section concludes with the hero's question: "What is the Unspeakable Word?" (p. 53).
3. Discovery of *physical*, luminous principle of electricity, the "power of the sky" (p. 57), which will lead to invention of light bulb or "box of glass" in Ch. 5. Hero still has much to learn (p. 57) concerning how the men of the Unmentionable Times exploited light-power.
4. Hero's romantic love values with the "Golden One"/ Two lovers give each other individualizing names: ego-concept develops through love, yet there is a childlike inadequacy of language to communicate egoistic love.
5. "We made it . . . alone . . . Ours alone and only." (p. 63). Invention of the "box of glass" which converts the "power of the sky" into Promethean light/ Productive work values develop hero's awareness of the unity of his soul and body and lead him in the chapter's conclusion to a desire to see his body and self *mirrored* (p. 67: "to know the likeness of our own person.")
6. *City of We: Flashback:* Hero has escaped from prison after 30 days captivity and torture by his "brothers" because he has not confessed why he violated curfew/ Hero's hope and *ignorance:* Will his brother scholars tomorrow acknowledge the value of his Promethean gift of physical light?
7. *Uncharted Forest: Flashback* on hero's *insight* and *knowledge* of his "brothers" anti-life altruism; his brother scholars rejected his Promethean gift of light and desire to enchain him/ Hero's *insight* that his motive for inventing the luminous glass box was "for its own sake" rather than "for the good of our brothers" (p. 85).
8. First day in Forest/ Hero's egoistic development from his "aloneness" climaxes in his *realized* desire to see his body, himself, and his ego-centric world *mirrored* on water (pp. 89-90).
9. Second day in Forest/ Hero's romantic love values *fulfilled* and realized when the Golden One escapes to the Forest to be with the "Unconquered"/ Diminishing guilt from discovery of joy and ecstasy of romantic love (pp. 94-95).
10. Discovery of the *luminous* house from the Unmentionable Times whose books will lead to the discovery of the ego-concept as a spiritual illumination in Chapters 11 and 12. Hero still has to learn the word and "spark" (p. 106) to create a new Promethean world.
11. "I am. I think. I will." Opening ego-word *answers* dramatically the question posed at the end of Chapter 2. Ecstatic, unconfused paean venerating holy ego and rejecting "We".
12. *Epilogue:* Hero's guiltless "deliverance" (p. 114) in accepting the ego-concept from the house's books/ Future of egoistic society of "I"; "portals" (p. 122) of hero's fort endorse religion of "EGO" (p. 123)/ Hero changes his name to egoist *PROMETHEUS* (p. 115).

WORLD OF EGO: PROMETHEUS UNBOUND AND PROMETHEUS THE FIRE-BEARER (Ch. 7-12)

The parallels between light and religious imagery underline Prometheus' conversion from "the worship of the word 'We' " (p. 119) to the worship of the "god . . . I" (p. 113), the "Sacred word: EGO" (p. 123). Through thematic transvaluation of religious values the "sin" and "transgression" of Prometheus' developing egoism become identified with "the blessed thing which I had called my curse" (p. 114). The novel which opens with the hero's confused guilt (p. 11: "It is a *sin* to write this.") concludes with "deliverance" (p. 114) in the guiltless acknowledgment of the truly sacred and godlike meaning of the individual self: "The *sacred* word: EGO" (p. 123).

This Promethean vision of self-liberation and self-exaltation through moral progress from the concept of "We" to that of "I", supported by the light and religious imagery, is revealed in the novel's structural organization and symmetry.

In its form, *ANTHEM* exhibits bipartite "ring composition"[14] (Figure 1) As a bipartite structure, the novel divides, on the basis of symbolic setting, into two equal groups of six chapters each. The first half, Chapters 1-6, is set in the world of the "We", "the City of the Damned" (p. 121), with its stiffling of the ego in productive and romantic values. The second half, Chapters 7-12, opens in the world of ego, solitude, and the "Uncharted Forest" where the hero's altruist "brothers" dare not venture. This bipartite structure corresponds to the thematic movement of psychological liberation from "We" to the acceptance of the ego and "I".

In addition, by "ring composition"[15] each chapter of Part I is thematically balanced and answered by a parallel chapter in Part II in the relation of states of ignorance, darkness, guilt, or bondage (in Part I) to states of knowledge, spiritual light, pride, or deliverance (in Part II).

ANTHEM, in both its imagery and structure which project the Promethean vision of man's self-liberation from the bodily and spiritual bondage of altruism and collectivism, demonstrates the equally Promethean craft and creativity of its authoress. Its clear, complex structure, moving poetic language, economy of artistic means to achieve its intellectual-emotive ends, and its contents (containing several themes that will recur elsewhere in Rand's writings: e.g. rational egoism, importance of productive work and romantic values, and the ethics of non-aggression) anticipate Rand's later novels and reveal her creative imagination in dramatizing her Promethean vision of man.[16] ◻

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] References and citations from Rand's four novels follow the pagination of recent *paperback* editions (all published in The New American Library Signet editions) with the following abbreviations of titles: *W.T.L.* = *WE THE LIVING* (New York 1959); *ANTH.* = *ANTHEM* (New York 1961), *T.F.* = *THE FOUNTAINHEAD,* "The 25th Anniversary Edition" (New York 1970), p. 48. (*"THE FOUNTAINHEAD* Revisited, A 27th printing).

[2] The author would appreciate references to any *literary* studies of Ayn Rand as a novelist. A diligent search through such bibliographical guides as *DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS,* the *MLA BIBLIOGRAPHY, AMERICAN LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP* (ed. J. Albert Robbins), and Blake Nevius', *THE AMERICAN NOVEL: SINCLAIR LEWIS TO THE PRESENT* (New York 1970), has turned up nothing substantial on Rand's literary art. Some nonliterary items may be found in *Essay and General Literature Index, Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature,* and *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature.* Two short considerations of Rand as a SF writer appear in Chad Walsh, *FROM UTOPIA TO NIGHTMARE* (London 1962), pp. 81-82, and Mark R. Hillegas, *THE FUTURE AS NIGHTMARE;* H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians (New York 1967), pp. 146-47. Rand's literary existence is briefly acknowledged in James D. Hart, *THE OXFORD COMPANION TO AMERICAN LITERATURE,* 4th ed. (New York 1965), p. 694; and more informatively in Barbara Harte & Carolyn Riley, *200 CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS* (Detroit 1969), pp. 225-27.

[3] Jerry H. Bryant, *THE OPEN DECISION: THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN NOVEL AND ITS INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND* (New York 1970), pp. 169-72, gives *ATLAS SHRUGGED* a sociological analysis with elements of psychologizing. Bryant is guilty of the genetic fallacy when he psychoanalytically conjectures that Dagny Taggart's multiple loves betray Rand's wish-fulfillment (cf. p. 172). More soberly, Hazel E. Barnes, *AN EXISTENTIALIST ETHICS* (New York 1967), pp. 121-49, presents a thoughtful analysis of the distinctions between orthodox existentialism and Rand's "Egoistic Humanism." Barnes also judges Rand's nontragic literature as "wish-fulfillment" (p. 149).

[4] Nora Ephron, *WALLFLOWER AT THE ORGY* (New York 1970), p. 48. (*"THE FOUNTAINHEAD* Revisited, A Strange Kind of Simplicity," *NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW,* May 5, 1968).

[5] Whittaker Chambers, "Big Sister is Watching You," *NATIONAL REVIEW* 4 (1957), p. 595.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 596. Granville Hicks, "A Parable of Buried Talents," *NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW,* Oct. 13, 1957, p. 4, brands *A.S.* "a demonstrative act rather than . . . a literary work" and "Not in any literary sense a serious novel . . . ."

[7] Ayn Rand, *THE ROMANTIC MANIFESTO: A PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE* (New York 1969). Nathaniel & Barbara Branden, *WHO IS AYN RAND?* (Paperback Library: New York 1964), Chapter III, pp. 72-118 (Nathaniel Branden's "The Literary Method of Ayn Rand") and Chapter IV, pp. 119-91, Barbara Branden's "A Biographical Essay"). Nathaniel Branden has two recorded lectures dealing with Ayn Rand's literary art in his course "Lectures on the Basic Principles of Objectivism": Lectures 17 and 18 ("Romanticism, Naturalism, and the Novels of Ayn Rand, Parts I and II").

[8] Ayn Rand, *THE ROMANTIC MANIFESTO,* p. 25.

[9] *T.F.,* "Introduction," p. viii; cf. p. ix for the phrase "man worship."

[10] Especially the Angel recording (#36214) with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra conducted by Jean-Claude Hartemann.

[11] For a scholarly account of the Prometheus myth with its variants among Greek mythographers, see H. J. Rose, *A HANDBOOK OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY* (New York 1959), pp. 54-56. A more popular study of ancient and modern adaptations of the legend is found in Michael Grant, *MYTHS OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS* (New York 1965), pp. 178-89. Gilbert Highet, *THE CLASSICAL TRADITION,* Ch. 23, pp. 520-40, shows how artists achieve "The Reinterpretation of the Myths."

[12] *ANTH.,* p. 115.

[13] Cf. p. 109: "the judgment of my mind is the only *searchlight* that can find the truth."

[14] Ring composition is a formal principle for organizing literary matter or themes symmetrically around a central (and generally emphasized) core. It is an artistic structuring device employed since antiquity by the greatest authors including Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, Thucydides, Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Dante, etc. See Cedrick Whitman, *HOMER AND THE HEROIC TRADITION* (Cambridge, Mass. 1958) for the symmetrical structure of the *ILIAD.* George E. Duckworth, *STRUCTURAL PATTERNS AND PROPORTIONS IN VERGIL'S AENEID* explores the use of ring composition or "recessed panel framework" in the composition of the Aeneid. Recently, the works of Leo Strauss and his followers have exploited for literary interpretation ring composition and "central significance" in such authors as Thucydides and Plato. See Leo Strauss, *THE CITY AND MAN* (Chicago 1964).

That Rand is a very exacting artist in outlining her novels is attested to in Barbara Branden's biographical sketch, contained in *WHO IS AYN RAND?,* pp. 145, 157-58. Not only does Rand create traditional narrative structures of exposition, conflict, complication, crisis, climax, and resolution, but she also integrates with this plot structure complementary thematic balances whereby chapter balances chapter (or even scene balances scene within chapters, especially in *T.F.* and *A.S.,* her two most artful novels).

[15] By ring composition, the balances between Ch. 6 and Ch. 7 of *ANTHEM* is that of the City of bondage, torture, and "We" to the Forest of freedom, growing joy, and "I". The hero passes from a state of *ignorance* concerning how his brother scholars will value his gift of light to a saddened *knowledge* of Ch. 7, where the flashback reveals the antilife altruism that rejected this Promethean gift. Chapters 2 and 11 balance in the relation of question (What is the Unspeakable Word?) to answer and knowledge (the use of "I" in the startling opening of Ch. 11). The other balances are self-explanatory with the possible exception of the correspondence between Ch. 3 and Ch. 10. Chapter 3 centers on the excitement of the hero's discovery of the principle behind the "power in the sky"; however, he does not yet "understand" (p. 57) the relationship between the "power of the sky" to the light bulbs in his secret tunnel. He later discovers in Ch. 5 how to reproduce the luminous power of the sky by means of his invention of a "box of glass" (p. 63) or crude light bulb. Chapter 10 similarly revolves around the principle of intellectual power to spiritually illuminate and its later actualized discovery in Ch. 11 where the hero articulates the word "I" (the word which, in the opening of Ch. 12, he informs us he first read "in the books I found in my house", p. 114). In our earlier text quotation from Ch. 10, p. 101, we noted and underlined the *luminous* properties of the house which was discovered "at sunrise" and which radiated a "white flame" and fire from its windows. Just as Chapter 3's discovery of electric power anticipates the later physical illumination of the invention of the luminous "box of glass", so also Chapter 10's discovery of the fiery house with its "book power" anticipates the later intellectual illumination of Prometheus from his reading the word "I" in the house's books. This anticipation of spiritual illumination from the books is clearly signalled at the end of Ch. 10, when the hero within the house senses the need to speak a word that will produce a "spark" (p. 107) to beget a new egoistic world.

[16] *ANTHEM,* being a product of Romantic art, its concern for perennial human values applies to people of all ages and social systems which restrict and diminish the individual's sense of his own ego. Prometheus' struggle in the novel to discover his own meaning and ego may be used as a motivating symbol for each individual's quest to realize *fully* the sacredness of his own person and to rekindle the ofttimes feeble Promethean flame of one's ego.

Whenever destroyers appear among men, they start by destroying money, for money is men's protection and the base of a moral existence. Destroyers seize gold and leave to its owners a counterfeit pile of paper. This kills all objective standards and delivers men into the arbitrary power of an arbitrary setter of values. Gold was an objective value, an equivalent of wealth produced. Paper is a mortgage on wealth that does not exist, backed by a gun aimed at those who are expected to produce it. Paper is a check drawn by legal looters upon an account which is not theirs: upon the virtue of the victims. Watch for the day when it bounces, marked: 'Account overdrawn.'

AYN RAND, Atlas Shrugged

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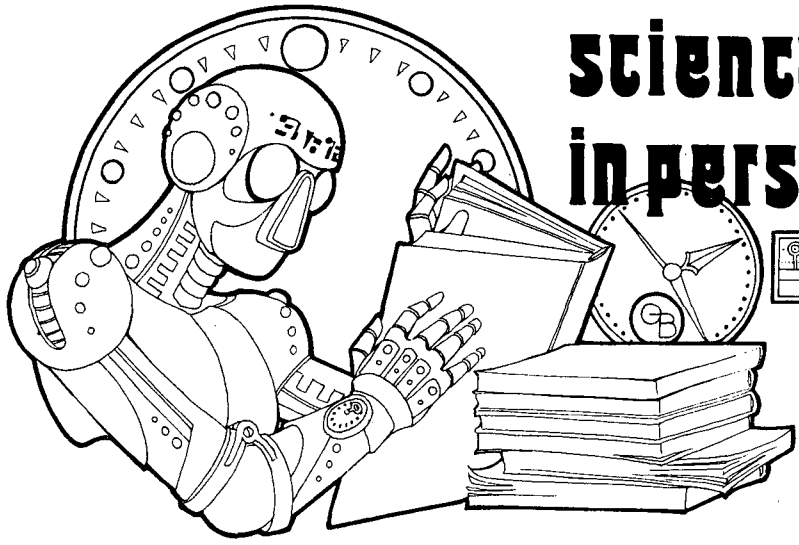

science fiction in perspective

JOHN J PIERCE

John Pierce's Science Fiction column alternates monthly in REASON *with Davis Keeler's Money column.*

STAPLEDON'S EPIC HISTORIES

Readers who know nothing else about science fiction are probably familiar with the names of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells. Few of them, however, will have ever heard of **Olaf Stapledon** (1886-1950).

Yet Stapledon was perhaps the most creative mind ever to work in SF, and his influence is so pervasive that no intelligent person can claim to understand the genre in its modern form without appreciating that influence.

Stapledon wasn't—and isn't—a popular writer. He considered himself first a philosopher, and his role in science fiction (before the name of the genre was generally accepted) that of a mythmaker. Some of his "novels" aren't novels at all—but he never pretended they were.

A few years ago, there was a sudden wave of enthusiasm among some SF critics for "mythology." What this usually meant in practice was merely the borrowing of plots and symbols from Greek mythology, which has always enjoyed literary respectability. But this wasn't what Stapledon had in mind more than 40 years ago.

"To romance of the future may seem to be indulgence in ungoverned speculation for the sake of the marvelous," he wrote in his preface to *LAST AND FIRST MEN* (1930). "Yet controlled imagination in this sphere can be a very valuable exercise for minds bewildered about the present and its potentialities.

"Today we should welcome, and even study, every serious attempt to envisage the future of our race; not merely in order to grasp the very diverse and often tragic possibilities that confront us, but also that we may familiarize ourselves with the certainty that many of our most cherished ideals would seem puerile to more developed minds. To romance of the far future, then, is an attempt to see the human race in its cosmic setting, and to mould our hearts to entertain new values."

Science fiction, he thought, should be "neither mere history, nor mere fiction, but myth. A true myth is one which, within the universe of a certain culture (living or dead), expresses richly, and often perhaps tragically, the highest admirations possible within that culture. A false myth is one which either violently transgresses the limits of credibility set by its own cultural matrix, or expresses admirations less developed than those of its culture's best vision."

A MAN DIVIDED

Stapledon the philosopher was a man divided—a scientific radical socialist who believed in Earthly utopia, but a mystic whose search for God eventually led him to a deathbed renunciation of his political ideals; a visionary who wanted to change the future by changing people's imaginations, yet a fatalist who believed as strongly as John Calvin in the preordination of human destiny; a humanist who thought that intelligence is the only really important thing in the cosmos, yet a pessimist who doubted human intelligence to be adequate for the challenges of the present and the future.

The often tortured vision that emerged from these conflicts make Stapledon's works seem alternately beautiful and terrible to many readers—awful, perhaps, in the original sense of the word. Yet even those who are repelled by his philosophy find themselves caught up in the brilliance of his imagination.

Besides *LAST AND FIRST MEN,* his major works include *ODD JOHN* (1935), *THE STAR MAKER* (1937) and *SIRIUS* (1944). Until recently, the only available editions were from Dover Books, but Penguin Books has recently reissued all of them but *ODD JOHN.* That and *SIRIUS* are true novels; the other two are imaginary future histories on a scale embracing, literally, eons.

LAST AND FIRST MEN chronicles the entire future history of the human race, from the present—Stapledon's present, of course—to its ultimate extinction on Neptune two billion years hence. Humanity's struggle to achieve the highest possibilities of intelligence is the continuing theme of an epic which covers the rise and fall of, not merely nations and cultures, but entire races.

An American-dominated world-State that collapses with the exhaustion of fossil fuels is only the beginning of this mythological pseudo-history that chronicles mutations that change the very nature of humanity, a disastrous

interplanetary war with hive intelligences from Mars, biological experimentation with "improved" forms of men (some with giant brains, other with telepathic capabilities, and—on Venus—even flying men), migration to other worlds, and eventual attainment of the quest for evolutionary perfection—just before the Sun becomes a nova.

It is hard—rather, impossible—to do justice to a work like Stapledon's in a paragraph. Any summary is a distortion of the immense detail and complexity of imagination in the original. *LAST AND FIRST MEN* alone involves so many varied developments that it would be possible to use its historical background as the setting for literally thousands of novels.

Trying to summarize *THE STAR MAKER,* an evolutionary history of the entire universe, is an even more hopeless task. Entire species are the "characters" in this epic, which relates the unique development of each to its eventual role in the creation of a Cosmic Mind able to share the thoughts and experiences of all—and to confront the mystery of the Star Maker (a god, but far from a loving one).

Among the species that figure in *THE STAR MAKER* are humanoids (but often with psychologies based on different primary senses, such as taste), echinoderms, nautiloids, hiveminds, arachnoids and ichthyoids (living in symbiosis) and vegetable-intelligences. Even stars turn out to be sentient beings, and conflicts between stellar and planetary life (as well as between philosophies of star-faring planetary races) lead to wars that devastate entire galaxies before reconciliation leads to the eventual Supreme Moment of the Cosmos.

The influence of both works has been seminal. The Cosmic Mind is echoed in Arthur C. Clarke's *CHILDHOOD'S END* and again—in Clarke's contribution, at least, as opposed to Stanley Kubrick's—*2001.* Nor could Clarke's *THE CITY AND THE STARS* have been written without both *LAST AND FIRST MEN* and *THE STAR MAKER* having existed. Clifford D. Simak's *WAY STATION* portrays a relationship between a human protagonist and a galactic culture that can only be called Stapledonian.

STAPLEDONIAN INFLUENCE

Science fiction novels involving symbiotic species or cultures, such as Poul Anderson's *THE REBEL WORLDS* and *THE PEOPLE OF THE WIND* owe a great debt to Stapledon, as do many of the imaginative variations in possible forms and psychologies of alien intelligence that are the stock in trade of modern SF. Stories and novels of the remaking of man to live in new environments or for other reasons, such as James Blish's *THE SEEDLING STARS* and Ursula LeGuin's *THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS* also show Stapledonian influence.

To this day, Stapledon still has the last word on some themes. *ODD JOHN* is a novel about a superman—not the one from the comic books, and not Bernard Shaw's either, but an evolutionary mutation who is to *homo sapiens* what *homo sapiens* was to *pithecanthropus.*

A superman story, by definition, is a virtual impossibility. "A cat may look at a king," the narrator tells John at the beginning of the novel. "Yes, but can it really *see* the king?" John answers. "Can you, puss, really see me?"

If Odd John had written the novel, it would have been beyond the comprehension of human intelligence, and Stapledon's narrator has to do the best he can trying to "see" his subject, never with the certainty of knowing just what it is he sees. John has a precocious childhood—when he speaks, his first words are complete sentences; and he has gone through practically the entire sum of human knowledge (and more than held his own in learned discussions with mature scholars in various fields) by the time he is 10.

John's efforts to find others of his kind—some of whom have gone insane from loneliness others of whom have tried to adapt to a world populated by (to them) morons—and create a colony on a remote island are told from the human viewpoint as far as they can be understood. But the actual meaning of John's actions—and his inhuman *attitude* toward them—remain elusive, even before the mass suicide of the colony in face of an attack by the Great Powers.

Superman stories had appeared in SF before *ODD JOHN,* and have appeared since, but Stapledon set the standard—one which has never been surpassed, or even equalled.

Other works by Stapledon include *LAST MEN IN LONDON,* an attempt to survey the contemporary world from the viewpoint of the Eighteenth Century; *MEN ON NEPTUNE*—not as successful as *LAST AND FIRST MEN* itself; *THE FLAMES,* about an encounter between humans and energy-beings seeking refuge on Earth; and several others.

Stapledon's works, especially the future history chronicles, are hard to get into for many readers. *LAST AND FIRST MEN* and *THE STAR MAKER* both get off to extremely slow starts, and the really imaginative portions do not begin for several chapters. Too, Stapledon did not have a literary mind—no one could call his style poetic. Yet there is a sort of poetry of ideas to his works that has continued to attract a loyal—if limited—following since his death 23 years ago.

Now that his most important books are becoming available in popularly priced editions, no one with a taste for the imaginative should deny himself the experience they will create in his mind. ◻

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foreign correspondent

HOLLAND—SHOWCASE OF SOCIALISM

It started 10 years ago in Amsterdam, when a handful of so-called Provos started their humoristic antiauthoritarian campaign. Everyone in Holland still remembers the days when zealous policemen confiscated the white painted bicycles which the thought-provoking youngsters had dedicated to the public. No further proof was needed to convince the law-abiding Dutch that authorities in Amsterdam cared little about parking, transport- and air-pollution problems.

The Dutch government, back in 1967, replaced Amsterdam's aristocratic burghomaster by a smiling socialist professor; but antiauthoritarianism was there to stay. Hundreds of action groups were being formed, some of them like Provo, Kabouter (dwarf), and woman's lib Dolle Mina attaining nationwide publicity.

A recent addition is this year's one-issue movement, **"Save Veronica."** It started when Holland's most popular radio station, called Veronica after the ship on which it is located, washed ashore this spring. This would have been the end of regulation-dodging "Radio Free Holland," had it not been for a massive protest movement. The point was made; now, Veronica rules the sea- and air waves again.

Did all this rollicking enthusiasm of the freedom-loving Dutch gain any freedom? Tragically little indeed; the reason being that their activism was usually rooted in socialism. Actually, the average Dutchman has lost the power to express himself in terms of individualism. A discussion of politics invariably turns out to be an exchange of socialistic cliches. One result of antiauthoritarian pushing is however noteworthy. Cries for the appearance of a strong man on the political scene become louder and louder . . . .

DISMAL PICTURE

The present socialist government, born in May 1973 after six months of protracted birthpains, is highly deficient in self-confidence. No wonder, because with the 1848 Communist Manifesto almost completely implemented, the county offers a dismal picture. Inflation is killing savings, pensions and business forecasts alike. Teachers, civil servants and employees in the government-owned steel industry are engaging in mass protests. Army personnel blows off steam at boiling point. Trade unions reached an all time high strike record this year. Policing the problem-ridden 13 million nation is done by 600,000 civil servants. Almost one little commissar for every four families!

The Dutchmen have protested by adding four new parties to the ten already in parliament. One for each of the last four elections. However, their combined voting strength of 15% is fully negligible as their leaders fail to understand the real cause of the malaise.

Annual confiscation of revenue by the government now stands at 50% of the Gross National Product (cf. 45% in the USA) and the prospects are dim: Taxation is going up in 1974 and revenues down; and government plans for 1974 call for housing, rents and land prices to be frozen, unemployment disbursements increased, workers' participation in management stepped up and wealth redistributed anew.

What then is left of the traditional work-ethic, the creed that made Holland once prosperous and a haven for political refugees throughout four centuries? Its supporters obviously have gone into hiding, except for that handful that publishes a monthly four-page market-economy bulletin. Despite its lofty title *BURGERRECHT* (rights of the burgher), it reads like a horror file.

Looking for forecasts of a better future, I asked a few optimists their opinion. They pointed to the sixteenth century, when on a given day, government increased sales taxes up to 10%. The angry population rose as one man, and threw out its (then Spanish) rulers, thereby creating the Dutch republic. A similar patriotic event could happen, they insisted, if their fellow-Dutchmen fashioned themselves after Copenhagen's tax lawyer Mogens Glistrup, whose tax rebellion may well reshape Danish political history at the 1977 elections. [See Foreign Correspondent, October 1973.]

Other observers reminisced that in the good old days Amsterdam was known as a place where traders were philosophers and vice versa. They preferred to wait the call from some sort of a **John Hospers,** whose many name-sakes over here, as of yet, fail to radiate his fine gift of libertarian leadership.

The short of it is that the masses in Holland seem to have put absolute faith in Karl Marx's 125-year-old manifesto and that the loners are praying for a miracle. With nobody but reality to prove them wrong.

Michiel van Notten

POETIC PERILS

Squatting on the garden fence,
like a bellied farmer, the moon pretends
disinterest in my passing;
and stars, their Scandinavian faces,
peering clandestine thru the night
as children peer about corners.
The trees imagine I cannot hear them
chatter . . . and still as I near;
the leaves, so innocent—when I'm beneath,
gossip like women in summer heat
the minute my back is to them.
They think I've hidden a falling star
and hope I'll lead them to it.

Wendy McElroy

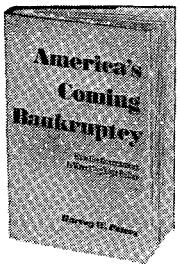
TO E. E. CUMMINGS

..... clinging rain)
I'm a simple woman
devouring life with chopsticks,
drinking ecstacy from thimbles
(I hardly spill a drop).
Hawklike on my haunches
watching the exploits of a raindrop
s-t-r-a-n-d-e-d on the pane.
Amoebalike it c r e e p s its way
t'ward the innocent sill;
halted
by
a

of dust, recovering
its composure, now-
here is a spectacle
that could be more receptacle
to wasting ink.
(Congratulations . . . . . .

Wendy McElroy

AMERICA'S COMING BANKRUPTCY



Financial counselor Harvey Peters tots up our national debts—and finds disaster.

Do you know the grand total of American debt —government, business and personal? It has now passed one and a half *trillion* dollars. That's $1,500,000,000,000.

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Unless we take drastic steps, warns Harvey Peters, "Eventually all America, from the Federal Government to the lowliest citizen, must become impoverished. This has happened before, to nations whose former greatness is now only reflected in the pages of history books, and this can happen to America."

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- Effects of boom-bust on economic safeguards. New dangers in savings and loan deposits, life insurance, hospitalization insurance, and retirement benefit programs. How federal securities laws create a false sense of security
- Little-known Supreme Court decisions that allow the government to levy the income tax not only against income, but also against private property
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- How the bureaucracy defines words in ways that invite public misunderstanding
- How the American consumer is forced to pay the cost of raising capital for American business
- How nonprofit organizations spend billions inflating the economy. Why their spending has the same effect as spending by the government
- How the Kennedy Administration placed the economy in a boom-bust orbit. Causes of the balance-of-payments problem
- Alternatives to the income tax
- Government policies that cause poor-quality products and sloppy service
- Why FDR's innovations **looked** good, regardless of their merits
- The deceptive image of increasing productivity
- The government's power to inflate. How it has operated since World War II
- Defense spending: that old red herring
- Why full employment is not necessarily productive
- The Gross National Product, and the fraud it perpetrates
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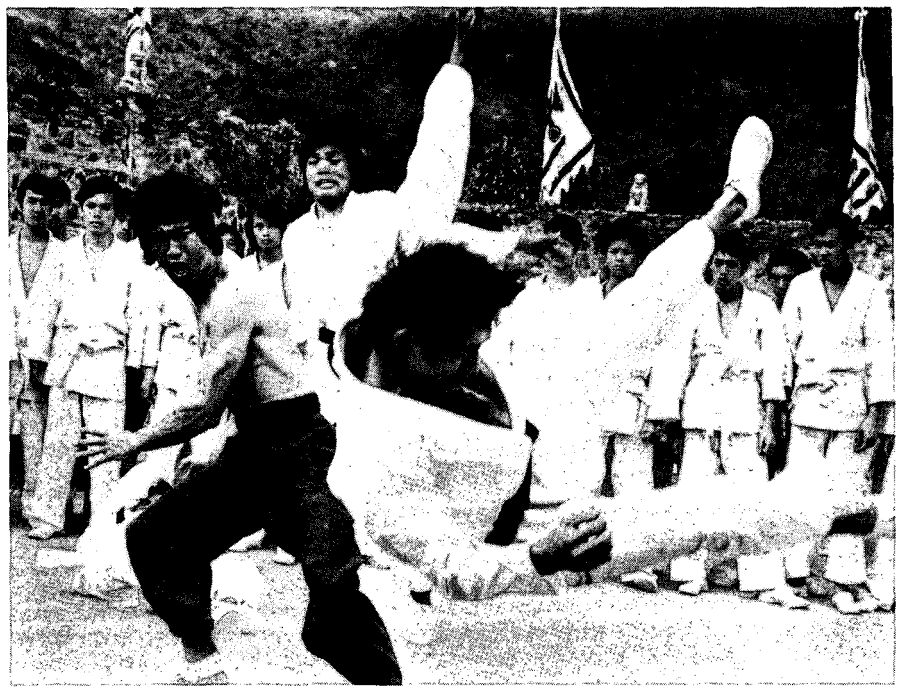
movies

REVIEWED BY
CHARLES BARR

• **ENTER THE DRAGON** is a superior action thriller that is likely to augment the already impressive popularity of Kung Fu and allied martial arts. The plot is basically an adaptation of the early James Bond thriller, *DR. NO,* and like its predecessor *ENTER THE DRAGON* forsakes subtlety and believability in favor of incredible heroics and rip-roaring action. The late Bruce Lee stars as a master of the martial arts, recruited by Hong Kong authorities as an undercover agent to smash a worldwide opium-and-slavery ring, and at the same time to avenge his sister's death. Lee's acting is at times wooden and low-key, but his performance in the fight sequences is awesome. Capable support is provided by John Saxon as an American refugee seeking to escape his gambling debts, and Jim Kelly as a black revolutionary. Two supporting performers are also impressive: Shih Kien as the arch-villain bears an uncanny resemblance to Leonid Brezhnev, and Angela Mao Ying displays astonishing resourcefulness and fighting spirit as Lee's ill-fated sister, Su-Lin. Except for a stereotyped opening, the screenplay is effective and keeps the action moving at a fast clip. The fight sequences, though highly stylized, are more interesting and more believable than their Western counterparts. Special effects are used sparingly and intelligently, and the best is saved for last: a climactic fight to the death in a chamber of mirrors. This and all the other fight scenes were staged by the star, Bruce Lee, whose untimely death earlier this year robbed him of a promising career. Rated "PG."



Bruce Lee wins a round during a martial arts contest in Enter The Dragon.

• Even though movies about dying athletes are in danger of becoming a drug on the market, **BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY** is such a superior film in every respect that it should not be missed. The story is about a young professional baseball player who is dying of a rare disease, but who wants to continue playing as long as possible. The film's emphasis is not on his impending death, but rather on his and his best friend's efforts to hide his illness from an increasingly suspicious manager. The movie's dramatic effect, along with its humor and pathos, arises naturally from the plot, never once degenerating into tear-jerking soap opera. The performances, by a cast of relative unknowns, are impeccable. Michael Moriarty stars as the slightly dull-witted catcher playing his final season. Robert De Niro comes across simply and directly in the role of Moriarty's friend and protector. Vincent Gardenia deserves an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of a harassed manager attempting to cope with a volatile team. Tom Ligon has an interesting minor part as a guitar-playing, motorcycle-freak catcher. Although the life-style of baseball players on the road is rendered in a convincing manner, the game itself is de-emphasized in favor of interaction among the characters. No last-minute, ninth-inning saves here. In the occasional scenes of players on the field, slow-motion photography is frequently employed, and to good effect: the emotional meaning of the struggle is vividly etched in the players' faces. The straightforward screenplay by Mark Harris is based on his own novel. John Hancock's direction is cool and precise. Everyone associated with the making of this movie should be proud. Rated "PG."

• Despite its catchy title, **40 CARATS** is considerably less than a gem of a movie, falling as it does into just about every pitfall that stage plays encounter when translated into film. Crippled from the start by an improbable and paper-thin plot, the movie is additionally laden with see-through theatrical mechanics, such as an endless series of double-takes and dramatic confrontations. Over what, you might ask? Well, it seems that this 22-year-old lad wants to marry a 40-year-old divorcee. Shocking, isn't it? Naturally, all the friends and relatives are aghast at this unconventional behavior, and our lovers find the path to true happiness strewn with myriad obstacles. Buried under several layers of this ridiculous plot are a few better-than-average performances and occasional bits of witty dialogue. Edward Albert is firm and decisive in his quest to marry Liv Ullmann, who is prim and proper and indecisive. Gene Kelly has a thankless, soppy-sentimental role as Miss Ullmann's worthless ex-husband. What are such nice people doing in a film like this? Rated "PG."

book review

Reviewed by Antony C. Sutton

THE HOUSEHOLDER'S GUIDE TO COMMUNITY DEFENCE AGAINST BUREAUCRATIC AGGRESSION (A Report on Britain's Government Machine). By Antony Jay. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 30 Bedford Square, London W.C.1. 1972. Price: 50 p (about $1.25). Pp. 64, paperback.

The evidence trickles in that other people in other countries are making libertarian protests against their own State machines. In March of this year the quasi-libertarian Progress Party in Denmark rocketed out of nowhere to pick up 18 percent of a political poll. In England the bureaucratic planning juggernaut has evoked a massive public outcry. Antony Jay is a free lance TV consultant in London and has written a political action manual for British antibureaucratic protesters. This is a practical well written little handbook which suggests an organizational structure and the tactics to use against planners and their projects.

Part I includes 13 sections on "The Initial Organization." Part II has 10 sections on "Campaign Tactics." Part III has 5 sections entitled "Battle is Joined" followed by two brief concluding sections: IV the "Counter Attack" and V "The Decision." The cover, by the way, is an obvious spoof on the British Government official "White Papers."

Jay's brief is studded with sound advice. For example: "hit first and hit hard," because, he explains, you have your best chance at the very beginning of a project. Jay states the first rule of protest as: "know precisely who your true enemies are." While the organization charts are overly complex, this is a manual for protesters who mean business. Jay suggests "cells" for grass roots action, funds, legal, influential allies, experts (for the attack on the concept), publicity and campaign headquarters. There is an excellent section called the "attack on the facts"; inaccurate facts—the author claims—are the weak point of all planners' documents.

One obvious limitation of the book is that Jay is addressing himself to British protesters operating under British conditions and many of the names and problems have no relevance to current U.S. conditions. Who are Bobby Charlton and Ena Charples? I don't know. On the other hand, generalizations such as "public officials are terrified of adverse publicity" apply just as much to the United States as Europe. You will have to pick and choose useful nuggets of advice. One example of Jay's practical suggestions is his advice to focus on lack of general credibility by showing discrepancies between prior governmental plans and subsequent performance ("Concorde, for example, which looks like costing £1,000 million, was estimated as £135 million.").

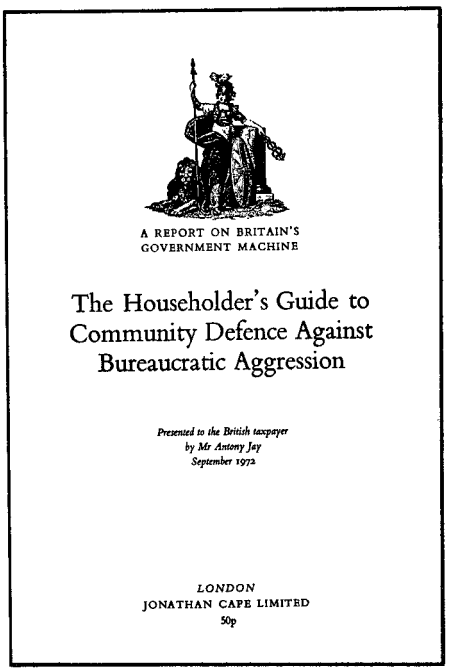
Unfortunately several schemes are vastly overplayed. They would not work anywhere in the world without backfiring and harming the cause. For example, release of 200 sheep in the local town hall (to symbolize protest at the expected sheeplike behavior) or induce a naked girl to ride Lady Godiva like down Main Street in protest. These are schemes born of desperation rather than practical purpose.

The book has no philosophical underpinnings. It is a down to earth manual for protesters, not a philosophical discussion. In fact there is no indication that Jay recognizes "bureaucratic aggression" as part of the wider problem of the coercive state.

Putting such comparatively picky faults on one side, this is a wonderful, delightful booklet. It will reassure you that the antistatist fight is a world struggle. And practicing protesters will unearth many adaptable ideas.

Where can you find a copy? Maybe some enterprising States side libertarian will order a batch from publisher Jonathan Cape in London. ◧

Antony Sutton is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University. He has written several books, most recently NATIONAL SUICIDE: MILITARY AID TO THE SOVIET UNION *(New York: Arlington House 1973).*


A REPORT ON BRITAIN'S GOVERNMENT MACHINE
The Householder's Guide to Community Defence Against Bureaucratic Aggression
Presented to the British taxpayer by Mr Antony Jay September 1972
LONDON
JONATHAN CAPE LIMITED
50p

Afraid for my dreams
Fragile, Venetian glass,
Wrapped in silk;
Safe in my mind,
Not-seen-safe,
From you and me
I, as happens to
Hidden beloved treasure
Carefully locked away,
Forgot as time
Passing in tired days
In sleepless weeks,
Half-remember only
The crickets' sound
Disturbing the timid
Heart . . .
I lost,
Summer
Slowly falling into winter.

Rudolph J. Laubscher

frontlines

□ FLP ON BALLOT!

There are only two names on the ballot for District Attorney of New York City and (yes, Virginia, it's true) one of them is the candidate of the **Free Libertarian Party!** In a triumph of hard work and good luck the Free Libertarian Party (FLP) collected 20,562 names on their election petitions (only 7,500 were required) and were not challenged *at all* (finding grounds for invalidating each others' election petitions is a favorite sport of NYC politicians), with the result that their entire slate of eight candidates will be on the municipal election ballot November 6th:

Fran Youngstein/Mayor
Bill Lawry/City Council President
Tom Avery/Comptroller
Lou Sicilia/Manhattan Borough President
Gary Greenberg/Manhattan District Attorney
Paul Streitz/Manhattan Councilman at Large
Spencer Pinney/City Councilman, 19th Dist.
Ray Goldfield/City Councilman, 33rd Dist.

At present **Fran Youngstein** is attracting the most media attention (publicity for libertarian ideals is the basic aim of the campaign)—quite aside from her inherent intelligence and vivacity, people seem intrigued at the novelty of a woman running for mayor, especially one whose campaign brochure leads off with "It's tough living in the City. City Hall sees to that." **Gary Greenberg,** however, is the candidate most likely to be faced with the dilemma of actually winning: his sole opponent is the ailing Frank Hogan, the incumbent D.A. supported by the four major parties. Greenberg's background as a staff attorney for the New York Legal Aid Society, Criminal Division, gives him a good background for promoting the FLP's call for the repeal of the City's victimless crime laws ("Is our city really any safer now that *DEEP THROAT* has been busted?") and a redirection of police efforts towards protecting citizens' lives and property.

Anyone wishing to help out with the campaign in New York City between now and November 6th (and the unprecedented chance to bring libertarian ideas to the attention of millions of people in New York and nationwide) is urged to contact the Free Libertarian Party, Room 201, 15 West 38th Street, New York, NY 10018, tel: (212) 354-0292. Money is needed to print campaign literature and buy media time, and people are needed to help with the campaigning!

FLP mayoral candidate Fran Youngstein

□ EQUITARIAN ASSOCIATES CONFERENCE

On August 23, 24, and 25 the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee was the meeting ground for a group of people interested in exploring the implications of Ayn Rand's Objectivism for some traditional problems in philosophy. "The Metaphysics of Knowledge and Mind" was the title and general subject matter of the conference, sponsored by the **Equitarian Associates,** a mid-western group interested in issues of Objectivist philosophy. Those reading papers were **Dr. Tibor Machan, Douglas Rasmussen, Roger Bissell, Dr. Eric Mack, Joel Mykelbust,** and **Dr. Betty Erwin,** and the papers ranged from issues surrounding scientific knowledge and knowledge in general, through the mind/body problem and its relation (or solution) to computers, free will and biofeedback.

In explaining why the Equitarian Associates had decided to center this conference on philosophical issues, Douglas Rasmussen, co-founder of the Equitarian Associates and conference chairman, pointed to the need for serious scholarly work following up on some of Rand's hints. Mr. Rasmussen borrowed from one of his professors in calling the two days of intensive study and discussion "a feast of reason." Then, in an interesting historical reference, he noted that the last "feast of reason" was associated with the Jacobins; the participants in that feast were ultimately subjected to the guillotine. The point intended was that at least some of what must be done in order to save ourselves from the (if only metaphorical) guillotine is just this kind of careful engaging in reason about some of the issues fundamental to a free society.

And, in spite of the mixed anticipations and interests of the participants, the conference was in that respect a success. Over 60 people attended, coming from Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Maine, Michigan, Ohio, and New York. Although not even half of those who came were academically inclined, interest was maintained at a high level and provocative discussions followed presentation of the papers.

□ NOTES

A recent draft of the new Bill of Rights being considered at Louisiana's Constitutional Convention includes the following section: "No law shall impair freedom of commerce by arbitrarily limiting the practice of any occupation to a certain class of persons, by controlling the production or distribution of goods, by dictating the quality or price of products, or by requiring any business to open or close at a given time." Members of the **Libertarian Party of Louisiana** are leading a drive to support this clause . . . **Grant La Point,** Chairman of the **Alaska LP,** reports that the Party had a very successful booth at the Tanana Valley Fair that was held in Fairbanks recently. Hundreds of pieces of literature were handed out and many new members were signed up, thus strengthening Alaska's number one position in per capita membership among state LP's . . . Enthusiasm is building for the candidacy of **New Jersey LP** gubernatorial hopeful **John Goodson.** A major press conference is planned at which Goodson will sign a contract which will legally bind him to his campaign promises (the first of which is a ten year moratorium on legislation). Goodson surprised the political establishment in New Jersey when he turned down free television time offered to him by the NJ Public Broadcasting Authority. Said Goodson, "it is immoral to expect the taxpayers to help pick up the tab for my campaign." . . . Libertarians in Houston, Texas area are planning a festival week of activities to coincide with **Nathaniel Branden's** speaking there October 19th. For further information contact **Robert Bakhaus,** 5905 Glenmont #64, Houston, TX 77036. (713) 666-8706. ◘

Please send material for inclusion in FRONTLINES *to Lynn Kinsky at* REASON, *P.O. Box 6151, Santa Barbara, CA 93111. Meeting and activity announcements will be carried as space permits; however we must receive announcements two months before the actual event if we are to publish it as a "coming attraction" rather than as history. Tell us about your group, your activities, your strategies for social change in as much detail as possible. Items accompanied by photos are especially welcome.*

Nuclear War, Can It Happen?

Back in the fifties, great numbers of Americans were concerned about the possibility of nuclear war. Many people built fallout shelters and stockpiled food. Today, things are different. If there is one thing just about everybody is agreed on, it is the impossibility of nuclear war. "The Russians," it is said, "Would have nothing to gain from destroying the U.S."

Unfortunately, such logic seems to have escaped the Soviet rulers. The Soviet Union is presently pursuing the most massive military buildup the world has ever seen. And the configuration of Soviet forces is such that a first strike is implied. In case after case, weapons systems and deployment policies which seem quite senseless if we do *not* postulate a planned first strike are seen to be instantly understandable if we do make such a postulate. The Soviet SS-9 missile, for example, delivers a payload which is many times larger than would be needed to destroy even the world's largest city. Its only conceivable purpose is to destroy hardened U.S. missile silos.

Stop and think about that. *Its purpose is to destroy hardened U.S. missile silos.* There is no need to destroy our missile silos if they are empty, right? And if they are *not* empty, doesn't that imply that the Soviets are attacking first?

Not proof, you say? You are right. It isn't proof. It is merely one small piece of evidence. But as you look at more and more pieces of this particular jigsaw puzzle, it is very easy to get disturbed. When you put them all together, the theory that makes them fit is grim indeed. The theory: that the Soviet rulers are engaged in systematic preparations to launch a nuclear surprise attack against the United States.

Further, it looks as if attempts to avert such an outcome by persuading our "representatives" in Washington to take action, are doomed to failure. If so, then our only hope lies in the actions which we take *as individuals*, to prepare for what is coming.

I believe that the indicated plan of action is as follows:

(1) If you are living in a major target area, move. (2) Prepare a retreat in an area far removed from target areas, fallout areas, and areas likely to attract refugees. (3) Locate your retreat in an area where you can expect to have libertarians for neighbors. If the U.S. ceases to exist, the only protection you will have will be your neighbors. If they are not libertarians, the government which they will set up will respect neither your right to life nor to property.

Such, in the form of a brief sketch, is the situation as I see it. Accordingly, I have purchased land in a location suitable to the establishment of retreats by libertarians. It goes without saying that such retreats would serve equally well in case of hyperinflation and economic collapse in this country. If you are interested in a more detailed presentation of this reasoning, so you can decide for yourself whether it has merit, use the form below to send for the RETREAT INFORMATION PACKAGE.

Please send ..... RETREAT INFORMATION PACKAGE(S) at $2 each, to:

Name .....

Address .....

City .....

State ..... Zip.....

Make check or money order payable to: Mitchell Jones, P.O. Box 12963, Austin, Texas 78711

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS FLUNK AGAIN

The evidence continues to accumulate (for those who weren't already convinced) that public schools are incompetent to do their intended job. Two recent studies have unearthed shocking new facts about American high schools.

The first, done by the Joint Council on Economic Education, evaluated social studies textbooks frequently used in public schools. In particular, the Council looked at the way these books treat economics at the high school level. In general, they concluded, most of these textbooks "are unlikely to assist a student either to identify an economic problem or to use economic analytical process. . . . High school students whose knowledge of economics has been acquired through courses circumscribed by the textbooks principally used [in the social studies courses evaluated] would be quite unprepared to cope with most problems of economic public policy." Such a finding makes it easier to understand why some 80% of the population favors wage and price controls. Considering that it is the state which benefits from this kind of economic ignorance, and from widespread acceptance of economic myths (regarding monopolies, government regulation, the cause of inflation, etc.), it is hardly surprising that a state-run school system turns out economic illiterates.

And the next time you see propaganda urging high schoolers not to drop out, or to go back to school, consider the findings of a recent Penn State University study. This four-year study of some 400 youths living near Pittsburgh indicates that high school dropouts tend to earn *more* money than graduates who come from the same socio-economic background. Most previous studies have looked simply at dropouts as a group, compared with graduates as a group. But this, of course, ignores the potentially different backgrounds, reports Dr. Jacob J. Kaufman at Penn State, the dropouts are found to do better than similar students who go on to graduate. The dropout enters the job market sooner, gaining seniority and job training advantages over a student with a similar background who can expect a comparable job after graduation. At the end of the study period, the dropouts were receiving higher pay (averaging $1.96 per hour compared with $1.67 for graduates) and were less frequently unemployed than the matching sample of graduates. Followup studies also showed that dropouts were more satisfied with their jobs; the graduates had higher expectations which their actual jobs couldn't fulfill.

Dr. Kaufman's study is not the first to reach such conclusions; studies of over half a million students by both the University of Michigan and the American Institute for Research in Pittsburgh have reported the same findings. The myth of high school graduation as essential to success has finally been debunked. As Dr. Kaufman points out, "Many students who have dropped out have made a pretty shrewd analysis of the system as it exists." Which is more than one can say for the educational establishment.

SOURCES:
- "High School Text Authors Flunk in Basic Economics," UPI (New York) 27 August 1973.
- "Dropouts Earn More, 4-Year Study Indicates," *LOS ANGELES TIMES* (Knight News Service), 12 August 1973.

FDA VS. HEALTH FOODS

Clifford Wells, a San Francisco health food store owner, has filed a $500 million class action suit against the Food and Drug Administration for damages resulting from the FDA's description—in print—of health food store owners as swindlers. Wells said he was tired of being pushed around by "Big Brothers—the Food and Drug Administration, the American Medical Association, and the California Medical Association." He added "health store owners have the right to be recognized as businessmen on any street, just as ladies' shops, liquor stores, or grocery stores are. We have been referred to by the FDA, AMA and CMA as nutrition quacks, food faddists and health quacks and the products we sell as shotgun mixtures," he said.

The official FDA magazine had described the health food dealer thusly: "He is a health swindler . . . watch out for this man . . . learn his trade secrets . . . how you can recognize a quack . . . etc."

"I think that people are so conditioned and full of baloney about religion, government, and protection," said Wells. "The American Medical Association is trying to take vitamins out of the health food stores and put them on a prescription basis. The way I see it—and this is a personal opinion—the AMA hasn't got their fingers into enough pots. They are already controlling the drug industry. Now they would like to control this industry too. Today everything is controlled. Money is the name of the game."

SOURCE:
- "Health Food Store Owner Sues FDA," Pat Rogalla, *FEMININE FITNESS,* June 1973. (Reported by Patricia Mathews)

THE FUTURE OF GOLD

In the wake of a recent softening in the free market gold price, a few analysts began bleating that gold "speculation" had run its course. Those more familiar with the workings of the real world (and not in the pay of governments committed to fiat-money inflation) couldn't disagree more.

International monetary analyst Harry Schultz predicts that a new international monetary arrangement will be announced shortly, in which "gold will be freely bought and sold by central banks, possibly at a new official price (around $125-150) or at the free market price, which will continue to fluctuate." He links this report specifically to West German Finance Minister Helmut Schmidt. Schultz also reports that the U.S. government sold gold in Europe on 21 August, in an attempt "to hold the free market price down until a new official price is announced—which *must* be seen to be *above* the free market price in order to seem realistic."

Meantime, predictions of higher gold prices continue to be heard. Lee Kuan Yew, the prime minister of free market Singapore, told the recent Commonwealth Conference in Ottawa that gold could rise to $480 per ounce if a new monetary system isn't implemented shortly. Dr. Franz Pick, the well-known currency expert, recently predicted that gold would hit $420 within two years. (Pick is a constant critic of the press,

"because it caters to government propaganda," e.g. by not challenging the government's cost of living figures. Pick claims last year's cost of living increase was 9% [vs. 3¼% reported by the government] and will be over 15% this year.)

Adding to the chorus of those favoring an end to "gold prohibition" in the United States is futurist Herman Kahn, director of the Hudson Institute. Kahn supports gold ownership for the most basic of reasons: self-protection against the state. "In my family," he says, "you used to give the eldest son a $20 gold piece. That was not to be spent on entertainment or women or wine. It was to bribe the frontier guard . . . to get out of the country in time of war, famine, or plague. How many people believe that an S.D.R. will be useful during a plague in bribing a frontier guard?" Kahn also supports a U.S. return to the gold standard, with dollar convertibility re-established at $150 per ounce. As to the likelihood of this occurring, Kahn said he would "bet even money" that the proposal would be realized "within a year."

SOURCES:
- *THE INTERNATIONAL HARRY SCHULTZ LETTER,* #303 (End August 1973), pp. 1-3.
- "Gold at $420?" *BUSINESS WEEK,* 19 May 1973.
- "'Jolly Herman' Kahn: His Forecasts Add Up," Sam Jameson, *LOS ANGELES TIMES,* 12 August 1973.

NEW CHALLENGES TO FCC CENSORSHIP

Recent months have seen the emergence of several new challenges to the Federal Communications Commission's stranglehold on American broadcasting. From the academic world has come a new Brookings Institution study urging an end to the FCC's economic regulation and control of program content of television. Entitled "Economic Aspects of Television Regulation," the report is the work of Roger G. Noll of Brookings and Profs. Merton J. Peck and John J. McGowan of Yale. The authors argue persuasively that, while current criticisms of the abominable quality and liberal bias of television are mostly deserved, these aspects of American TV are largely a result of the unusual economic structure of the industry. This structure, in turn, is largely the result of the FCC's regulatory policies.

Specifically, by regulating program content "in the public interest," under threat of license revocation, the FCC has given mighty incentives for blandness and timidity. Further, by its "local service" doctrine—namely that as many communities as possible should have local television outlets—the FCC has caused the very high degree of concentration of ownership and homogeneous program content. This paradoxical result comes about because the high cost of program production leads the vast majority of local stations to affiliate with one of the three networks, from which they obtain their prime-time programs. To change this dismal structure, the Brookings report recommends removing the FCC's responsibility for program content, relying on competition rather than "localism" regulations to achieve diversity, and limiting the FCC's role to engineering and technical matters.

On another front, the FCC and Rev. Carl McIntire have entered a new round in their several-year censorship battle. In 1970 the FCC revoked the licenses of two radio stations owned by Rev. McIntire, on the grounds of consistent violation of the "Fairness Doctrine." McIntire, who contends that the government has no right to force him to air views he considers wrong, appealed in federal court, meanwhile keeping the stations on the air. In June the appeal was turned down, and the stations went off the air in July. Undaunted, McIntire has announced plans to launch Radio Free America, a pirate radio ship anchored three miles off the New Jersey coast. With a five-day-per-week broadcasting schedule, McIntire intends it to be "the most controversial station in the country." All he wants from the government, he says, is to be left alone. "We believe in freedom," he maintains, "We want to tell the government what to do instead of having the government try to tell us what to think and say." To which we can only add "Amen."

SOURCES:
- "Does TV Have a Way Out of Its Box?" Leonard Silk, New York Times News Service, 16 July 1973.
- "'Radio Free America' to combat FCC Ruling," Louis Cassels, UPI (New York), 25 August 1973.

MORE COMPETITION FOR AIRLINES

Although the current make-up of the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) is the most pro-cartel, anti-competition in many years, external developments may force increased competition on the airline industry, to the benefit of passengers. In particular, two recent court battles may be harbingers of new anti-regulation legal moves.

In the first battle, unresolved at this writing, maverick Continental Airlines has filed suit in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to prevent the CAB from forcing it to go along with other airlines' demands to remove lounges from the coach sections of wide-bodied aircraft (747, DC-10, L-1011). Earlier this year, Continental's larger competitors decided to phase out the lounges in order to make room for more seats. United, TWA, and American all requested CAB permission to charge lower fares on the reconfigured planes. Continental, which kept the lounges installed, then countered by filing for an *identical* fare reduction. On 1 June, however, at the behest of its "competitors", Continental's proposed fare was suspended by a 3-1 CAB vote. Hence, the suit, in which Continental's attorneys argue that the CAB is overstepping its legal authority by using its rate-setting power to affect aircraft configuration and service features. The airline correctly views the CAB's action as "a serious precedent that threatens individual airline management competitive service decisions." So far, Continental has won the initial round when the court granted its request for a stay of the CAB's order suspending its fare filing, pending the court's review of the matter.

The same court recently set an important precedent in favor of increased airline competition. In a 2-1 decision the three-judge court remanded to the CAB for reconsideration a previously-adopted "fare package" for North Atlantic routes, which had been worked out by the International Air Transport Association, the industry cartel, and approved by the CAB. The court held that the cartelized rate-setting procedure was contrary to U.S. antitrust laws, as alleged by Ralph Nader's Aviation Consumer Action Project, which had brought the suit. The ruling is considered by aviation authorities as likely to lead to an "open-rate situation" or "price war" or "chaos"—i.e., free market competition.

SOURCES:
- "Continental Battles for Lounges," Harold D. Watkins, *AVIATION WEEK,* 6 August 1973, p. 24.
- "Fare Fight," *AVIATION WEEK,* 27 August 1973, p. 11.

This column reports trends in the advancement of individual liberty and rediscovery of economic freedom. Readers are invited to submit items of potential interest.

viewpoint

DAVID BRUDNOY

THROWING MILLIONS OUT OF WORK

How to Throw Millions Out of Work. No, that's not a fond hope. But it is one of the prime results to come out of the legislation recently passed by Congress increasing the minimum wage from its present $1.60 an hour to $2.20. Although President Nixon, happily, vetoed the bill on September 6, the Senate could over-ride easily enough if it can muster just one more vote. As M. Stanton Evans of the *INDIANAPOLIS NEWS* warns us in a superb recent article in *HUMAN EVENTS* magazine, the legislation is a surefire recipe for disaster.

For whom? For the marginal workers of America, specifically colored youths, certain farm workers, some kinds of domestic workers, and various others. Stan Evans reminds us of a report emanating recently from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The NAACP observed that the "rates of unemployment among black youths have reached disaster levels." According to the Labor Department's *MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW,* the jobless rate for nonwhite teen-agers seeking jobs in 1972 was 33.5 per cent!

One does not wish to commit the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy, which assumes that because phenomenon A occurs after phenomenon B, A is caused by B. But the facts on Negro youth unemployment and hikes in the minimum wage are fascinating, and revealing. 1951: minimum wage 75 cents; adolescent Negro unemployment, 15 per cent. 1956: $1 minimum wage; teen-age joblessness among Negroes, 26.4 per cent. 1971: $1.60; 30 per cent.

Most economists recognize that the minimum wage is **economically harmful,** especially to teenagers, nonwhites, and women. (Cf. the work of Professors Peterson and Steward, "Employment Effects of Minimum Wage Rates," 1969, and Professor Thomas Moore of Michigan State University.) The Moore study validates NAACP labor director Herbert Hill's prediction, that, "virtually an entire generation of ghetto youth will never enter into the labor force," given the expected increase in the minimum wage.

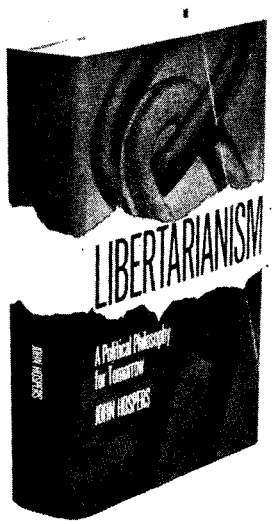
I recall the warning of Henry Hazlitt way back in 1946, in his classic book, *ECONOMICS IN ONE LESSON:* "You cannot make a man worth a given amount by making it illegal for anyone to offer him anything else. You merely deprive him of the right to earn the amount that his abilities and situation would permit him to earn, while you deprive the community even of the moderate services that he is capable of rendering. In brief, for a low wage you substitute unemployment."

Of course, those made unemployed owing to the minimum wage law can always turn to welfare, precisely the other side of this debased coin: first Congress takes away their jobs by Congressional do-gooding; then Congress can up everybody else's taxes to pay for welfare to provide for the unemployed now shunted onto the debasing status of recipients of the dole.

No doubt, men in Congress try to Do Right. And many are now talking the rhetoric of "restoring Congressional powers;" "asserting Congress's role," and so on. Given the fact that Richard of Watergate, the President, is vehemently opposed to this terrible piece of legislation, and the Congress overwhelmingly favors it, one wonders if a reassertion of Congressional powers will really be such a blessing. But, ideology must be served: hikes in the minimum wage are Good Things. So be it. ◻

David Brudnoy teaches at Harvard University's Institute of Politics, University of Rhode Island and Boston College. Dr. Brudnoy's viewpoint appears in this column every third month, alternating with the viewpoints of Murray Rothbard and Tibor Machan.

The case for "the idea whose time has come" . . .



LIBERTARIANISM

BY JOHN HOSPERS, PH.D., DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The first authoritative study of this revolutionary political philosophy—the fast-growing ideological movement that has won converts from the ranks of the New Leftists and Goldwater conservatives. Here, at last, is an expert dissertation on what this unique philosophy is all about. How did it come into being? Why does it appeal to young intellectuals although it is radically different from movements with which they had been allied in the past? Is it, as they believe, the ideal philosophy for the world today?
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publisher's notes

• **ATTENTION POTENTIAL AUTHORS:** Persons interested in submitting articles for possible publication in *REASON* should request a copy of our *new* Author Information Sheet, which spells out the types of material desired and provides data on style, format, submittal procedures, and compensation. Especially important considerations are the requirements for such things as double-spaced typing, submittal of *two* copies of the manuscript, inclusion of a word count, and provision of a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. While seemingly small points, adherence to such rules makes *REASON's* editorial processing considerably more efficient. Write Reason Author Information, Box 6151, Santa Barbara, CA 93111.

• **NEW CORRESPONDENT:** We are pleased to add Michiel van Notten to *REASON's* international network of foreign correspondents. Notten is an attorney who has worked in Belgium with the Common Market. An articulate spokesman with impressive credentials, he is hoping to organize a libertarian center in Holland and has ambitious plans for the libertarianization of Holland. Notten recently traveled throughout the United States, where he made contact with many libertarian activists. His initial report on the gloomy political scene in Holland appears in this issue on page 38.

• **REASON REPRINT:** Dr. Paul Craig Roberts' article, "Who Are the Imperialists," which appeared in *REASON's* August 1973 issue, was also published in *HUMAN EVENTS* in September. Roberts' article exposed the State export monopolies ("marketing boards") in some West African nations as the "real" imperialists which have exploited private farmers and obstructed the development of an African middle class and African private enterprises.

• **BONUS FOR SUBSCRIBERS:** This month's Special Issue is the largest single issue *REASON* has ever published. It is the *third* Special Issue provided at no extra charge to subscribers this year, a real savings to subscribers, since Special Issues have a single-issue cost of $1.50. If you would like to enter gift subscriptions for your friends, relatives or teachers, we will, for a limited time, commence each new gift subscription with this month's special Ayn Rand issue. For *each* new $9 gift subscription we receive, we provide a **free three-month subscription extension.** Give *two* gifts and get a *three-month* extension; *three* gifts for a *nine-month* extension, etc. In order to have gift subscriptions start with the Rand Special Issue, orders should so specify and they must be postmarked by 1 November 1973.

• **LONGEVITY AND NONPOLITICS:** A California Congressman who is conducting a campaign for governor by walking the length of the state recently encountered an old man on a park bench in San Diego. Representative Jerome R. Waldie, who estimates he shook about 15,000 hands on his 33-day trek in the first phase of his 360-mile walking campaign, offered his hand to the man. As reported in the *LOS ANGELES TIMES,* "the old codger told the footsore Democratic congressman, 'I don't want to shake your hand.' 'Why Not?' the nonplussed Waldie asked. 'I'm 105 years old,' the man replied. 'I've never touched a politician or been touched by one in my whole life—and I think I owe my longevity to that.' 'And he wasn't kidding,' Waldie said in telling of the incident." Waldie also said that "People have been turned off completely on government" and the old man's views were shared to a great extent by others.

• **ACADEMIC ASSOCIATES DEFUNCT:** A leading libertarian book service, Academic Associates (AA), has recently gone into bankruptcy and is no longer in business. Those interested in ordering items carried by AA and listed in its publication, *BOOK NEWS,* might consider sending their order either to *BOOKS FOR LIBERTARIANS,* Dept. R, 422 First St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 or *LAISSEZ FAIRE BOOKS,* 208A Mercer, Dept. R, New York, NY 10012.

• **HOLZER ON GOLD:** NBI lecturer and Ayn Rand's former personal lawyer Henry Mark Holzer had an interesting article in the *WALL STREET JOURNAL* (29 June 1973). Called "Gold and the Endless 'Emergency'," it discussed the legal history of America's gold prohibition and the use of declared "national emergencies" as a justification. A longer version of the article appeared in the Winter 1973 issue of the *BROOKLYN LAW REVIEW* under the title "How Americans Lost Their Right to Own Gold—and Became Criminals in the Process." Holzer now teaches constitutional law at Brooklyn Law School.

• **COMING NEXT MONTH:** *REASON's* December issue will feature an exclusive interview with Yale Brozen, influential professor of business economics at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business. Also scheduled for next month is F. Paul Wilson's profile of the late John W. Campbell, Jr., a unique individualist who strongly influenced contemporary science fiction, and Dennis Chase's holiday message, "No, Virginia—There Is No Santa Claus." Also in the December issue, Money columnist Davis Keeler discusses the expansion of I.R.S. power to secure access to private bank account records. If you are not yet a subscriber, send in a check today for $9 and you can be assured of receiving the next twelve issues of *REASON.* ◻

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reason profile

At a time when many American citizens and politicians consider the implementation of a nationalized health care system a matter of the highest priority, it is refreshing to see some voices raised in protest. One leader in the fight against socialized medicine is thirty-six year old Marvin ("Mickey") Edwards. For the past five years Mr. Edwards has edited *PRIVATE PRACTICE*, a socio-economic journal (current circulation: 170,000) for the medical profession, in the process earning three Freedoms Foundation awards for editorials and the high quality of the magazine. His free-market views on medical care have been further propounded in his book *HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH* (published by Arlington House in 1972; reviewed in the December 1972 issue of *REASON*) and in numerous essays, pamphlets and articles. Mr. Edwards is currently employed in Washington D.C. as a special consultant to Republican members of Congress on health care legislation.

Mr. Edwards came upon his libertarianism early—even as a teenager he realized that "regardless of any noble purposes that might be served by coercion, nobody has the right to perform good by coercing somebody else." Edwards states, "I've always been a libertarian; Ayn Rand gave me the intellectual ammunition to support my personal philosophy, and others have added to it since." His view of libertarianism is an activist one: "There is something to be said for participation in the political process through the organized parties, and much to be said for participation on an issue-to-issue basis. John Citizen is not thinking of the consequences of political activism and proposed legislation, and is certainly not thinking of abstract philosophical consequences. The libertarian must actively point out the results likely to flow, and to *make* a few favorable results flow as well."

Mr. Edwards' career reflects this active involvement in spreading free-market ideals. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism and a doctorate in law, and has been a reporter and assistant city editor of the Oklahoma City Times as well as a publicist and advertising man. He is an attorney and has been active politically, currently serving as a member of the state executive committee of the Oklahoma Republican Party. In addition, he is a former national vice chairman of the Young Republicans and is on the Board of Directors of the American Conservative Union.

MARVIN H. EDWARDS

Mr. Edwards' special interests include psychology, mass motivation research, politics, Russian literature, and poetry. He enjoys playing chess and tennis and his tastes in music and literature are wide-ranging with Mencken and Twain being favorites. "To coexist with an increasingly unfree world and to effectively resist its trends, requires a combination of furious indignation and the ability not to take the world all that seriously. We Jews have a toast: 'L'Chaim'—to Life—it's my motto." ◻

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In the once prosperous Ruhr Valley, the blast furnaces are growing cold, the steel mills are shutting down, and heavy industries are grinding to a standstill. Unemployment in Germany, the most prosperous nation in Europe, is increasing rapidly and it's the same in Britain, Italy, France, the Scandinavian Countries and, in fact, throughout the world!

The economy is shakier now than at any time since World War II, it is getting shakier by the minute, and not only is an imminent depression a certainty in the minds of many economists, but in many areas of the nation and the world it has already arrived!

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You don't have to be a millionaire to turn the depression to your advantage! In every depression, there have always been men who made money while others were going broke. There have always been businesses that flourished while others were going under. There have always been stocks that were going up while most were going down.

And there have always been men living securely and well while others were scuffling merely to stay alive!

There are techniques to use, there are methods that work! You don't buck the tide, you swim with it. You don't fight the depression. You join it! And you do it with knowledge. With know-how. By knowing what to do and how and when to do it!

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letters

"FREE RIDER" PROBLEM

John Ziegler's piece on semi-voluntary taxation ["The Pay-What-You-Want Tax Plan," August 1973] was very provocative. But Ziegler exaggerates when he says "a family earning $10,000 pays $4,800 a year" in various taxes. The Herriot-Miller estimates for the Census Bureau show about a thirty per cent tax load at this income level. Bad enough.

Also, Ziegler simply avoids the key problem of the "free rider," and the resulting tendency to under-invest in services for which one can get the benefits without sharing the cost. Ziegler says some would support public schooling, and "others would choose to use their rebates to shop for free market alternatives." Still others would use the present system without supporting it, and would pocket the rebates. I watch "public television" all the time, and never send them a dime. Begging is an inefficient way to raise funds, because there is no connection between use and payment.

Incidentally, Joe Cobb's article in the July issue ["Let's Establish a New Gold Standard"] says exactly what I would have said if I were equally lucid. I'm beginning to think a monetary rule of "zero" would be the simplest and best arrangement. It would also make a terrific bumper sticker: "Freeze the Money Supply."

Alan Reynolds
Associate Editor, National Review
New York, NY

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Mark Terry's letter on libertarian government (*REASON,* July 1973) was good but he never applied the idea [of libertarians taking over a lightly-populated county] to such action at the state government level. *REASON* carried the idea one step forward in *Trends,* September 1973, under the title of "Alaska Self-Determination." As a seven-year resident of Alaska, who plans to return soon, I must say that most libertarians do not presently realize the truth spoken in the last sentence of the *Trend* article ["Alaska could . . . provide a golden opportunity for libertarians to put their principles into action."]. However, few people in the "South 48" have any idea of what Alaska is like.

The population of 300,000 lives in an area roughly equivalent to the Eastern U.S. from the Mississippi to the Atlantic and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Alaska is a top Libertarian Party state for number of members to total population and for percentage of Libertarian votes in the 1972 Presidential vote total. The electorate is small in number.

Alaskan resources are tremendous. In addition to petroleum, minerals, forests and fish, there are 20 million acres of cultivable land. Alaska's 600 million acre-feet of water crop is one third of the U.S. total, not counting inflow from Canada. (1/3 is east, 1/3 is west of Mississippi, approximately) Hot springs are already in use there and thermal power is abundant. The many rugged mountain chains with their continuous winds, make clean wind power a distinct possibility. (Princeton Windmill, *POPULAR SCIENCE,* November 1972)

For libertarians who want to control their own destiny, this may not only provide a "golden opportunity" but possibly the *only* opportunity of a lifetime.

Jon Hammond
Atlanta, GA

MORE ON JUDGING MUSIC

Judging from the "Letters" section in your September 1973 issue, you should run an article on the question: Can one make objective evaluations of musical compositions? I bet reader response would be terrific.

Surely, in her letter, Miss Familaro does not mean to assert that it will never be possible to judge music objectively. Most likely she means that at present we lack the theoretical insights to do so. But perhaps John Hospers has been secretly studying music theory, and unknown to us has advanced the science to a point where all this is possible.

One also wonders about the judgments one makes in strictly perceptual (non-verbal) terms. For instance, amongst my piano pieces I have a thing called "Mazeppa Galop" (Grand Etude) by A. Quidant. Now I find it difficult to escape the uncanny sensation that somehow or other this piece is something less of an accomplishment that Chopin's "Revolutionary Etude". I find it hard to believe that this particular preference is merely a question of taste.

Paul D. Christoffers
Frederick, MD

HOSPERS' VIEWS AMPLIFIED

In response to the two letters in the September *REASON* disagreeing with my judgments of films and musical compositions [*REASON,* letters, July 1973], let me say that I am neither surprised nor offended when other people's aesthetic verdicts disagree with mine; it isn't threatening to me as it would be if someone with different *moral* opinions, e.g. a Nazi, were living nextdoor and was prepared to eliminate me, come the revolution. In aesthetic judgments, I would be content if only those persons who refuse to listen to the works of some composers because of what they've been told (and the authors of the letters may not be in this group) would listen carefully to them for themselves and then form their own independent judgments, whatever these might turn out to be. Juxtaposing one reviewer's opinion with a contrary opinion (mine, in this case) is often a way of getting people to do this. In any event, there is no substitute for careful and repeated exposure to the music itself (not program notes, not histories of music or the biographies of composers), since this above all is the indispensable prerequisite for a considered aesthetic judgment.

The author of one letter states that although my judgments about music are "not objective," her own judgments about movies can be "objectively proven": for example, that *THE EMIGRANTS* is boring. Now, I certainly do not claim to have "proved" anything at all about musical judgments in my letter: I was simply presenting an alternative set of judgments, not trying to defend them; but how on earth could her judgment that *THE EMIGRANTS* is boring (which nobody I know of agreed with after seeing the movie) be "objectively proven"? One is tempted to reply in kind: "*You* found it boring—what does that prove?" She made the claim to provability; I did not.

One must be careful, incidentally, to distinguish between those works of art which one *likes* and those which one judges to be good: the two are not the same—one may like a song for nostalgic reasons which have nothing to do with

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—Rep. John Ashbrook

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one's considered judgment about its aesthetic value.

The other letter-writer observes that "Hospers has apparently forgotten that no aesthetic evaluations are worth listening to unless the standard and means of measurement . . . are supplied." Indeed so. It may or may not be interesting simply to hear someone else's judgment on a work of art; but it is true, of course, that making a judgment is a far cry from validating that judgment. And I know of not a single writer on aesthetics who is unaware of this simple fact. But trying to validate aesthetic judgments is a long and complex affair. Yes indeed, there must be *criteria* of judgment. (For example, one of a number of criteria for evaluating a work of art is its *unity;* but the specific kind of unity, and the amount of variety that can be incorporated without sacrificing unity, has been the subject of many a treatise on aesthetics from Aristotle to the present.) The criteria themselves are objective—they refer to features actually present in the work of art; but the *reasons why* a person adopts one set of criteria rather than another may not be entirely so: some critics (the aesthetic impressionists) claim that all such judgments are dictated simply by irremediable temperamental and other factors which differ from individual to individual, whereas others argue that aesthetic judgments are rooted in biological and psychological characteristics common to all human beings, and are accordingly valid for all human beings (though not for Martians or creatures constituted differently from human beings). This too is a long and difficult business to discuss (as I do at length in courses and seminars in aesthetics): I recommend reading, on this subject, Monroe Beardsley's *AESTHETICS* (Harcourt Brace 1958), especially Chapters 10 and 11.

The writer of the letter is certainly welcome to be "repelled" by my choice of films and compositions. What I am more inclined to be repelled by myself is the favorite indoor sport of jumping at conclusions: e.g., that just because one doesn't expound an aesthetic theory in a letter less than a page long, one therefore has forgotten the obvious, or is ignorant of aesthetic theory altogether.

John Hospers
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"SOCIAL CREDIT" DEFENDED

Although William Westmiller's article on Canadian politics [Foreign Correspondent, September 1973] should be generally enlightening to U.S. readers, his view of Social Credit unfortunately falls victim to the usual willingness to rely on popular misconceptions of Social Credit rather than on its actual economic ideas. As a result, Mr. Westmiller's summary is completely distorted.

He writes that "the theory of Social Credit . . . states that paper currency has inherent value". Such a concept is obviously absurd and if that were what Social Credit was about, it would never have attracted more than half a dozen people. In fact, Social Credit maintains precisely the opposite of what Mr. Westmiller claims it does. For Social Credit, paper money has *no* inherent value at all; it is valuable only inasmuch as it represents real wealth created in the society.

It is not Social Credit but socialist governments which have printed money without regard for its basis, have inflated the currency, and have viewed the treasury as a repository for an infinite stock of taxed "public money". By contrast, Social Credit, in the words of

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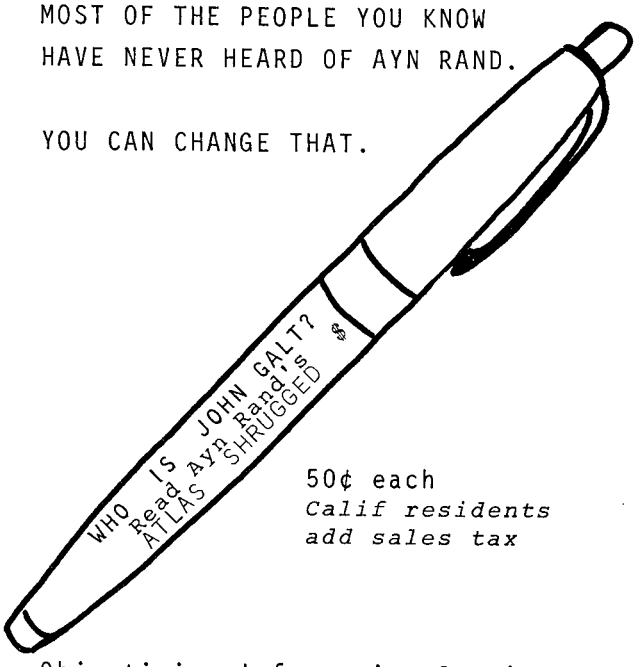

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one writer, "is a system which . . . not only discontinues the collection of taxes, but distributes surplus funds to the citizens in the form of a national dividend. It transforms the state from an organization whose motto is 'Always Take', to a government which is not a continuous misfortune borne by its citizens."

As automation and technology allow more production for less man-hours, you have people continuing to "work" at useless jobs, or becoming unemployed, or going on welfare. Why not let everyone work less for the same money? Instead of the puritan-socialist striving for an illusory "full employment" (which can be obtained easily enough by having the government hire people to dig holes and fill them in again) we should be utilizing technology to create as much unemployment as possible so that people can be free to do as they please.

This is the basis of Social Credit. In 1919, C. H. Douglas, the originator of Social Credit, calculated that no more than three hours work a day for adults between 18 and 40 was necessary to keep England going. (Half a century later, it should be even less). Douglas pointed out that there are two sources of wealth that are held in common and that both traditionalist and Marxist economists overlook: the accumulated sum of knowledge (which includes technical innovation) and the ability to do in concert what cannot be done individually.

These factors mean that each individual is able to create a continuously increasing amount of wealth for the same effort. Douglas proposed that this common wealth be distributed by a stated dividend drawn on what he called the community's social credit. This would close the gap between the total buying power of individuals and the total prices of goods ready for sale.

Gradually, modern technological society seems to be staggering toward what Douglas advocated, in spite of the hidebound ideas of most governments, unions and businesses. The necessary work force gets smaller and smaller with the exclusion of children, older people, younger people, etc., etc. The work week continues to grow shorter. This too, is a kind of "social credit". It is the natural result of technical innovation and capitalist productivity.

Mr. Westmiller echoes the socialists in calling Social Credit "funny money". Seems to me the money we have now is pretty ludicrous. Social Credit would restore real buying power and bring our economics into line with the advances of an industrial society. It is both the result and the vehicle of freedom.

Unfortunately, the Social Credit party in Canada has, over the years,, been subjected to the encroachments of Christian fundamentalism, socialism, conservatism, anti-Semitism and plain backwoods boneheadedness, none of which have anything to do with the original philosophy. But perhaps, now that "post-scarcity" economics are a subject of discussion, the social credit that invention and relatively free exchange have produced will be recognized.

It is certainly time for true Social Credit philosophy to be looked into seriously again, instead of being unthinkingly dismissed as "funny money".

Ian Young
Scarborough, Ontario
Canada

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. . . Aldous Huxley

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